■ METRO / A17

Copper wire thieves strike again in Muntinlupa

■ SPORTS / A19

Morales camp: Pacquiao can't win as 'he uses what he learned from his mistakes'

■ NEWS / A2

No plans to take over Meralco, says energy secretary

■ BUSINESS / B3

SMC beer sales up in China; revenue up by 21% in 2005

Mike A lobby one reason Marcelo quit, says Salonga

By Fe Zamora

FIRST GENTLEMAN JOSE MIGUEL ARROYO had "approached" former Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo over the fate of certain cases filed at the Office of the Ombudsman, former Senate President Jovito Salonga said yesterday.

The efforts allegedly exerted by the Presi-

MIKE A/ A5

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, January 19, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 42 P18 website: www.inq7.net

For 7 months, FBI clueless on Fil-Am spy, says report

WASHINGTON—BY THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN account, FBI analyst Leandro Aragoncillo was spying in plain sight. He rummaged through FBI computers for intelligence reports unrelated to his work and then e-mailed the classified documents to Filipino opposition leaders. *(See Page A8.)*

Aragoncillo had traveled more than a dozen times to the Philippines on personal business since 2000.

FOR 7 MONTHS/ A8

Army knew of escape plan

Hero's burial today for Fil-Am killed in Iraq

INABANGA, BOHOL—MANY OF the residents of this tiny fishing and farming village had never heard of Iraq until the body of US Army Sgt. Myla Maravillosa was flown home last week. *(Photos on Page A2.)*

Now everyone is talking about the war and the local girl who wanted to be a nun but joined the US Army instead, only to be killed by Iraqi insurgents on Christmas Eve.

Today, she will be buried in the local Catholic cemetery here with full military honors—another name on the growing US honor role of men and women killed in Iraq.

The body of Maravillosa, who emigrated to join her mother in Hawaii in 1997 when she was 16, was flown here last week in a steel gray casket draped with the US flag.

Lt. Col. Jacquelin Lyons, a spokesperson for the Joint US Military Advisory Group in Manila, said Maravillosa's body would be paraded from the town church with a full US military honor guard.

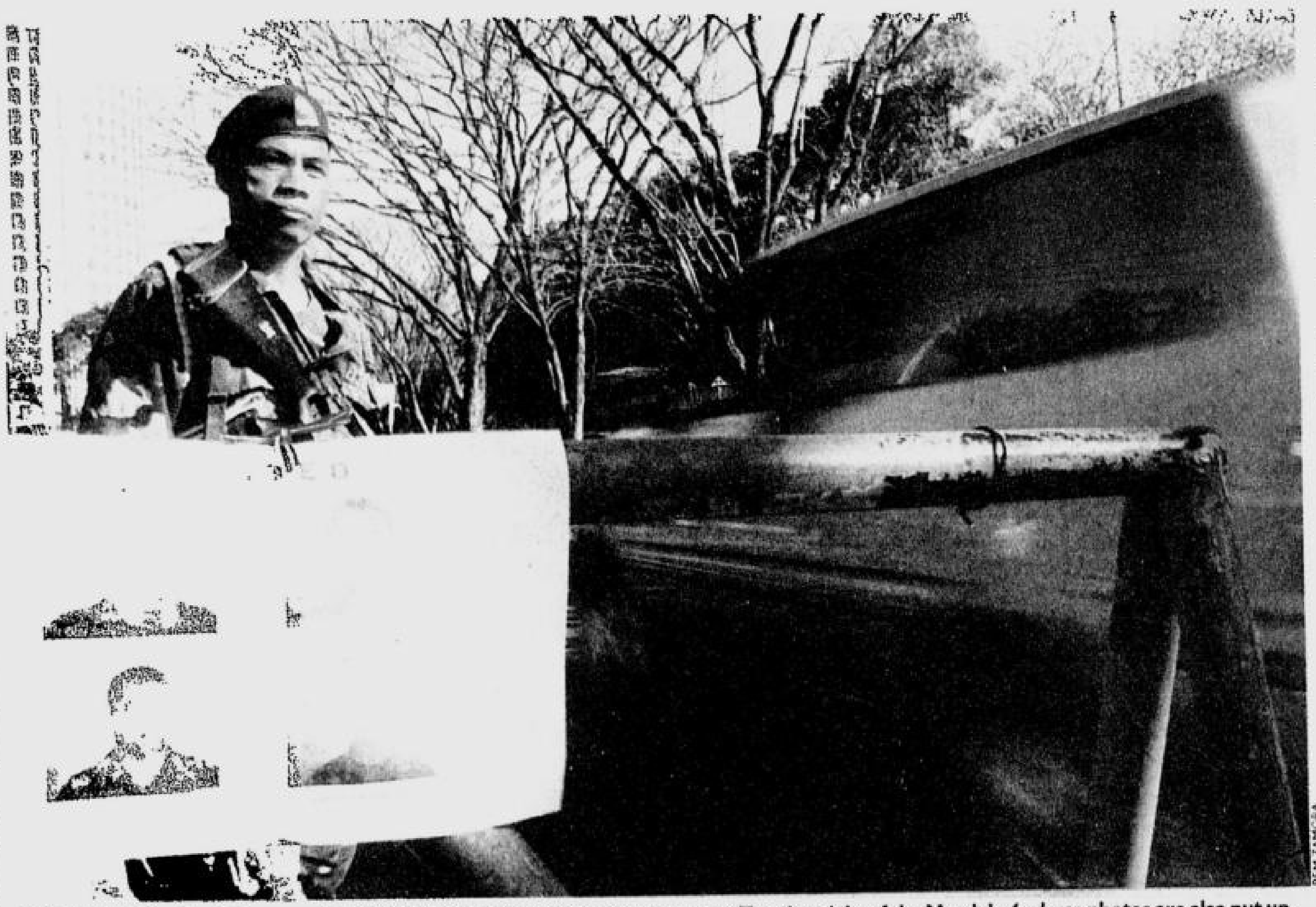
"She's a national hero. She gave her life for her (adopted) country," Lyons said.

Maravillosa is the second Filipino-American soldier to have been killed in Iraq.

Her wake in the modest family home accessible by a muddy unpaved path has drawn hundreds of townsfolk and relatives. They tell nightly stories of the girl who wanted to be a nun but ended up fighting a war.

Brig. Gen. Gregory Schumacher, commander of the Army reserve

HERO'S/ A5



REM ZAMORA

RED ALERT: Checkpoints are posted inside Fort Bonifacio following the escape Tuesday night of the Magdalo 4 whose photos are also put up. The military has asked the help of the man on the street to help in their manhunt for the mutineers of Oakwood.

Magdalo lawyer, senators don't buy story

By Dona Pazzibugan, Philip C. Tubeza and Nelson F. Flores

LAWYER ROEL PULIDO IS NOT buying the Army's story that four more Oakwood mutineers have escaped from military custody.

At least not yet.

"Until one of them calls me, I'm open to both possibilities," said Pulido, referring to the other possibility that the Army was hiding his clients.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on national defense, also raised questions about the whereabouts of the four junior officers.

"Did they escape? Where they allowed to escape? Are they being hidden? And the 4th one that I heard this morning, *niligpit ba* (where they killed)? If they were allowed to escape by certain elements, does this indicate that the sympathy to the Magdalo's cause is widespread?" Biazon said.

"If they escaped, in the face of the fact that there was supposed to be an intelligence report that they were going to escape, this is not a failure of intelligence, (but)

MAGDALO/ A8

AP, BULLIT MARQUEZ

THE MORNING before the escape, Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza was in court.

Army chief blames lawyer of mutineers

By Dona Pazzibugan, Tarra Quismundo and Christine O. Avendaño

IT'S A CASE OF BEING forewarned but not being forearmed, if the military is to be believed.

Four Army junior officers who took part in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny pulled off their escape from a high-security detention center in Fort Bonifacio on Tuesday night although the Army officials supposedly knew of their plan.

Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza and 1st Lieutenants Lawrence San Juan, Sonny Sarmiento and Patricio Bumindang Jr. escaped several hours after they attended a hearing at a Makati Regional Trial Court.

Exactly how the four escaped remained a mystery. At 8 a.m. yesterday, 11 hours after the discovery of the escape, Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. told reporters the military had known about the plan to break loose and had tried to preempt it.

Esperon said he ordered the transfer of the four mutineers from the Custodial Management Unit (CMU) to a nearby building on Tuesday afternoon to prevent them from escaping.

"They were supposed to be transferred but there was a discussion with the lawyer. There was a delay and so they had an opportunity to escape," Esperon told reporters.

Esperon said defense lawyer

ARMY/ A8

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

GOWN in red, white, blue topped by a rising sun is accented with chains. Students from different schools joined the fashion show at UP.

RAMPA KONTRA GLORIA!

GMA foes take to the catwalk

By DJ Yap

FROM THE DUST AND GRIME of street demonstrations to the glitter and glamour of the catwalk, the movement to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo has taken a new—and fabulous—turn.

Youth leaders on Tuesday night hit the ramp alongside professional models in a fashion show with a political statement: "Game Over Gloria."

The show was held at the Bahay ng Alumni at the University of the Philippines, Dili-

GMA FOES/ A6

Angry lawmakers in Senate, House move to terminate VFA

By Philip C. Tubeza and Michael Lim Ubac

THE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION calling for the termination of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement is ready, and is expected to be approved today by the Legislative Oversight Committee on the VFA (Lovfa), lawmakers said yesterday.

The two-page resolution calls for the termination of the VFA and its renegotiation into a Status of Forces Agreement (Sofa) that would allow Philippine custody of US nationals charged with crimes in local courts.

The resolution read: "It appears that the US government has failed to properly take into account the high level of sensitivity with which the Filipino public views the custody of US servicemen on Philippine territory accused of crimes such as rape.

"Now, therefore, be it hereby resolved by the Senate of the Philippines, the House of Representatives concurring, to express the sense that notice of termination of the VFA should be issued, in order to pave the way for [its] renegotiation into a Sofa, with provisions on local custody similar to those of the Sofa with Japan and Korea."

The Japan-US agreement allows Japan to take custody of American servicemen facing criminal charges in court. South

ANGRY/ A6

RP, US diplomats disagree over interpretation of 4 words in VFA

By Volt Contreras

A MERE FOUR WORDS IN THE RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement spelled a "difference of opinion" between Filipino and American diplomats who deliberated on the Philippine government's request for custody of the four US Marines charged with raping a Filipino woman last Nov. 1.

The disagreement stemmed from whether the VFA provision granting US authorities custody of the accused "if they so request" was fully complied with, according to Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Gilberto Asuque.

"We pointed out that there should have been a formal written request first, while their (the Americans') view was that it need not be formal," Asuque disclosed yesterday at a briefing when pressed for details on how the negotiation went.

"There was a difference of opinion," he said.

According to earlier reports quoting the US Embassy's Matthew Lussenhop, American authorities made a "verbal request" to unspecified Philippine officials on the night the four servicemen were accosted at the Subic Bay free port.

Reached yesterday, Lussenhop maintained: "That evening, there were a number of officials from

RP, US/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY JAMIE ALARCON, PDI RESEARCH/01/19/06

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second **FRONTPAGE**

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No plans to take over Meralco

Energy chief says gov't not even considering it

By Abigail L. Ho and Alcuin Papa

ENERGY SECRETARY RAPHAEL LOTILLA YESterday reiterated that the government was not taking over the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co. and indeed was not even considering such a move.

The government would much rather focus its attention on escalating world oil prices as this had a huge effect on the public, Lotilla said in a statement.

He noted that oil prices have reached their highest levels in the past three months.

Lotilla said the Department of Energy was too busy thinking of ways to mitigate the impact of rising world prices on domestic fuel and electricity prices to bother with a "non-existent plan" for a Meralco takeover.

"We continue to pursue the principle of securing a fair deal for electricity consumers and for the government, and advancing transparency and competition in the electricity industry," Lotilla said.

P42-B debt

Quoting Malacañang sources, the INQUIRER last month reported that a takeover of the distribution utility was one of the options that a top official had presented to President Macapagal-Arroyo to settle a long-standing dispute between Napocor and Meralco concerning a P42-billion debt that Meralco owed the state-owned power generator.

According to DOE data, the regional benchmark Dubai crude skyrocketed to a January average of $57.18 a barrel, from only $53.20 a month ago.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products soared to $65.98 in the first 17 days of January, almost $5 higher than the December average of $61.01 a barrel.

MOPS-based diesel also jumped to an average of $71.84 a barrel in the Jan. 1 to Jan. 17 period, from the $67.03-a-barrel average last month.

Lotilla said the DOE was particularly concerned about the crisis over Iran's nuclear program as Tehran supplied 24.6 percent of the country's crude requirements.

Iran is the Philippines' second biggest source of crude, next only to Saudi Arabia, which supplies 56.3 percent of the country's crude supply.

No to settlement

Consumer groups yesterday renewed demands for the Energy Regulatory Commission to junk a settlement agreement between Meralco and the Napocor concerning the P42-billion debt, saying it would lead to an increase in the electricity bills of Meralco's four million customers.

The National Association of Electricity Consumers (Nasecore) and the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) said the agreement would allow Meralco to pass on to consumers P20.5 billion of the debt it owed Napocor.

They said this would result in monthly electricity consumer bills increasing by 12 centavos per kilowatt-hour for the next five to six years.

Meralco had contracted to buy the electricity that it distributes from Napocor but has been reducing its purchases, preferring to source its power from the Lopez family-owned power producers.

MAMA'S HERO

Estelita Maravillosa (third from left), along with other relatives, views the US flag-draped casket of her daughter, Filipino-born US Army Sgt. Myla Maravillosa, in Inabanga, Bohol where she will be buried today. Sgt. Maravillosa (shown in inset with an unidentified Iraqi child two days before she died) was killed in Iraq in an ambush by Iraqi insurgents on Christmas Eve.

AP/AFP

CBCP replaces secgen, spokesperson

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE INFLUENTIAL CATHOLIC Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) is replacing its secretary general and spokesperson more than a week before its all-important plenary assembly later this month.

CBCP president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo yesterday announced the departure of Msgr. Hernando Coronel, who has been CBCP's secretary general and spokesperson since 2001.

In a brief statement, the Jaro, Iloilo prelate said Coronel was being given a new assignment by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales.

The CBCP media office said Lagdameo learned about the request through a letter sent to him by Rosales Friday evening.

"Yes, it is true that Msgr. Coronel, a priest in the Archdiocese of Manila, is being recalled by his bishop, Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales, who is giving him a new assignment," Lagdameo said.

But last Friday, Teresa Tunay, head of the media office, told the INQUIRER that Coronel's reported departure was just a "rumor."

"The CBCP president has no knowledge of such move, so how can we expect him to issue a statement based on a rumor?" she said in a text message. "Why release a piece of news that's not true only to retract it the following day?"

Lagdameo yesterday didn't say what assignment Coronel would be given by Rosales or who his replacement would be. Coronel is an elected CBCP official whose term expires in 2007.

There was talk within the CBCP that he would be replaced in an acting capacity by Fr. Juanito Figura, his current assistant and a known protégé of Lagdameo, until the next elections.

But the INQUIRER has learned from two independent sources, both Church workers privy to the issue, that there was more to the departure of Coronel than simply sending him away after serving the CBCP for 10 years.

One of them described his transfer as a euphemism for banishing the soft-spoken Coronel.

"Technically, they can't sack him because he's elected," he explained. "A graceful exit would be to offer him another job and hope that he accepts it."

Coronel himself refused to comment on his departure.

In a telephone interview with the INQUIRER on Friday, he said: "I don't know the will of God. I will miss you guys. I will treat you sometime."

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No cheating in Cebu, Noli's lawyer insists

THE ELECTION LAWYER OF PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro insisted yesterday that there was no cheating in the 2004 elections in Cebu province, denying allegations by former senator Loren Legarda that 90 percent of the ballots from two cities there were found to be spurious by the Presidential Electoral Tribunal.

Legarda, the defeated opposition vice presidential candidate in the 2004 elections, has a pending electoral protest against De Castro at the PET.

"The results of the actual count of the ballots for Legarda and De Castro from the cities of Mandaue and Lapu Lapu tallied with the results as reflected in the election returns and tally boards. There was no sign of any tampering of the results of the ballot count as well as the votes reflected on the returns and tally boards," Macalintal said in a press statement.

Macalintal, who spoke before the Rotary Club of Pasay City yesterday, asked why Legarda did not object to or question the authenticity and due execution of the election returns and tally boards if it was indeed true that 90 percent of the ballots were spurious.

"Ms Legarda is now stopped from questioning the results of the election from these cities because of her failure to object to the returns," the lawyer said.

"The fact that the count of the ballots tallied with the results shown in the returns which were not objected or contested by any party is a clear manifestation that the election in Cebu was clean and honest thereby confirming that the one million lead of President Arroyo and the 800,000 lead of Vice President De Castro over their respective rivals were cast for them honestly and cannot be taken away from them," Macalintal said.

With a report from Cynthia Balana

SC junks suit vs NorthRail

THE SUPREME COURT HAS ONCE MORE THROWN OUT a petition filed by squatters in Bulacan questioning the constitutionality of the of the multibillion-peso Northrail Project running through the province.

In a single-page resolution released yesterday, the high court denied with finality the motion for reconsideration filed by the Bulacan chapter of the League of Urban Poor for Action (Lupa), saying the petitioners failed to raise new arguments that would warrant a reversal of its previous ruling dismissing the petition for being filed prematurely.

"The basic issues raised therein have been passed upon… and no substantial arguments were presented to warrant the reversal of the questioned resolution," the court said in its latest ruling.

Armand Nocum

Bottled H_2O now part of US arsenal vs terror

By Julie S. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY — US troops in Mindanao and Sulu have started to use bottled water as another tool in their antiterror campaign aimed at stamping out the Abu Sayyaf.

The bottled water even came with an official endorser: US Charge d'Affaires Paul Jones.

At a press conference held at the Southern Command here on Tuesday, US Embassy personnel and American military officials distributed samples of the new antiterror instrument, with accessories in the forms of leaflets bearing profiles of wanted terrorists and corresponding rewards for their capture.

The label on the product, which comes in 12 oz plastic bottles, bears photos of the most-wanted Abu Sayyaf leaders—Isnilon Hapilon, Khadaffy Janjalani and Jainal Antel Sali Jr., alias Abu Sulaiman—with corresponding rewards of up to $5 million for their capture.

Also printed on the label are the words "Wanted for murder, extortion and kidnapping" and hotline numbers that informants could use to contact the appropriate agencies.

"It looks promising but I guess it would only be effective if a person is thirsty," said Ricardo Cabaron, Western Mindanao State prosecutor.

Col. Domingo Tutaan Jr., Southcom's chief of staff, said the distribution of the bottled water in areas where US troops have been conducting civic action was aimed at increasing the people's vigilance against terrorism.

Sandigan to set deadline for Erap lawyers

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN SAID YESTERDAY it would give former President Joseph Estrada's lawyers a deadline within which to complete their presentation of defense evidence, after repeated complaints by the prosecution that the deposed leader's attorneys were dragging out his five-year-old trial on plunder and perjury charges.

Justice Teresita de Castro, presiding judge of the Sandiganbayan's Special Division, made the declaration in open court during yesterday's hearing, saying she would provide specific details of the deadline next week.

No witnesses were presented at yesterday's hearing and De Castro decided to cancel a scheduled hearing next Monday as no defense witness was scheduled to be presented on that day. However, a hearing was set on Wednesday.

De Castro's decision to set a deadline was in response to a motion presented by government prosecutors asking the court to terminate the hearings and consider the case submitted for resolution.

The prosecution argued that even if the trial were to be terminated now, Estrada and his lawyers could not claim denial of due process as they have had almost three years to prepare and present their case. The prosecution presented its last witness and rested its case in April 2003.

"Due process has been very well kept and preserved," the prosecution motion said.

Former Manila City Prosecutor Jose Flaminiano, a member of Estrada's legal defense team, disputed the prosecution's charge that the defense was dragging out the trial. He told the court that the delays were "reasonable, not capricious and oppressive."

Flaminiano said the defense had been diligent in presenting witnesses, pointing out it had placed more than 80 witnesses on the stand. He said the relevance and materiality of the witnesses' testimony were for the court – not the prosecution – to appreciate.

Flaminiano said defense lawyers still had a number of witnesses to present, including Estrada himself, but were waiting for the court to rule on several motions filed by witnesses who refused to testify on Estrada's behalf and had asked the court to quash subpoenas it had issued requiring them to appear.

Flaminiano said it was the right of an accused to be heard and to use every available means to prove his innocence, especially in a capital offense such as plunder where the penalty is death.

MIAA stands firm on $5 security fee

By Nikko Dizon

THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT Authority (MIAA) yesterday stood firm on its plan to impose a $5 (P260) security fee on departing passengers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), following an opinion by the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) that it is the government's responsibility to shoulder expenses for security enhancements at international airports.

A third public hearing on the new fee has been scheduled for next week, Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the MIAA, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

"I don't know why IATA undermines our effort in financing the security needs in Philippine airports," Cusi said.

Cusi said that the MIAA has long been "carrying the burden" of spending for the security needs of the Naia terminals.

"But now it has become very expensive. We have to acquire new machines. Even the (bomb sniffing) dogs are already very expensive," Cusi said.

Cusi noted that IATA did not oppose the imposition of the security fee on passengers in other countries such as the United States, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

"*Hindi maganda* (It's not nice)," Cusi said of the IATA opinion.

The INQUIRER reported on Wednesday that IATA, the trade association representing the international airline industry, has said in a December opinion that the state, referring to the Philippine government, and not the flying public should shoulder the cost of security enhancements at international airports.

Villamayor; 53

ALICIA CHULVO VILLAMAYOR died on Monday, Jan. 16. She was 53.

She is survived by her husband Robert L. Villamayor, children Julie Ann, Nina Grace, Abet and grandson Andrei.

Her body lies at 24 Mercedes St., San Carlos Heights Subdivision, Tayuman, Binangonan, Rizal.

Interment will be held on Friday at the Himlayang Katoliko in Binangonan..

Cuenca loses Negros hacienda

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE LAST LEGAL OBSTACLE TO THE REDISTRIBUTION of one of the biggest sugar estates in Negros Occidental has been eliminated after a local court reinstated the title of the hacienda to its farmer beneficiaries.

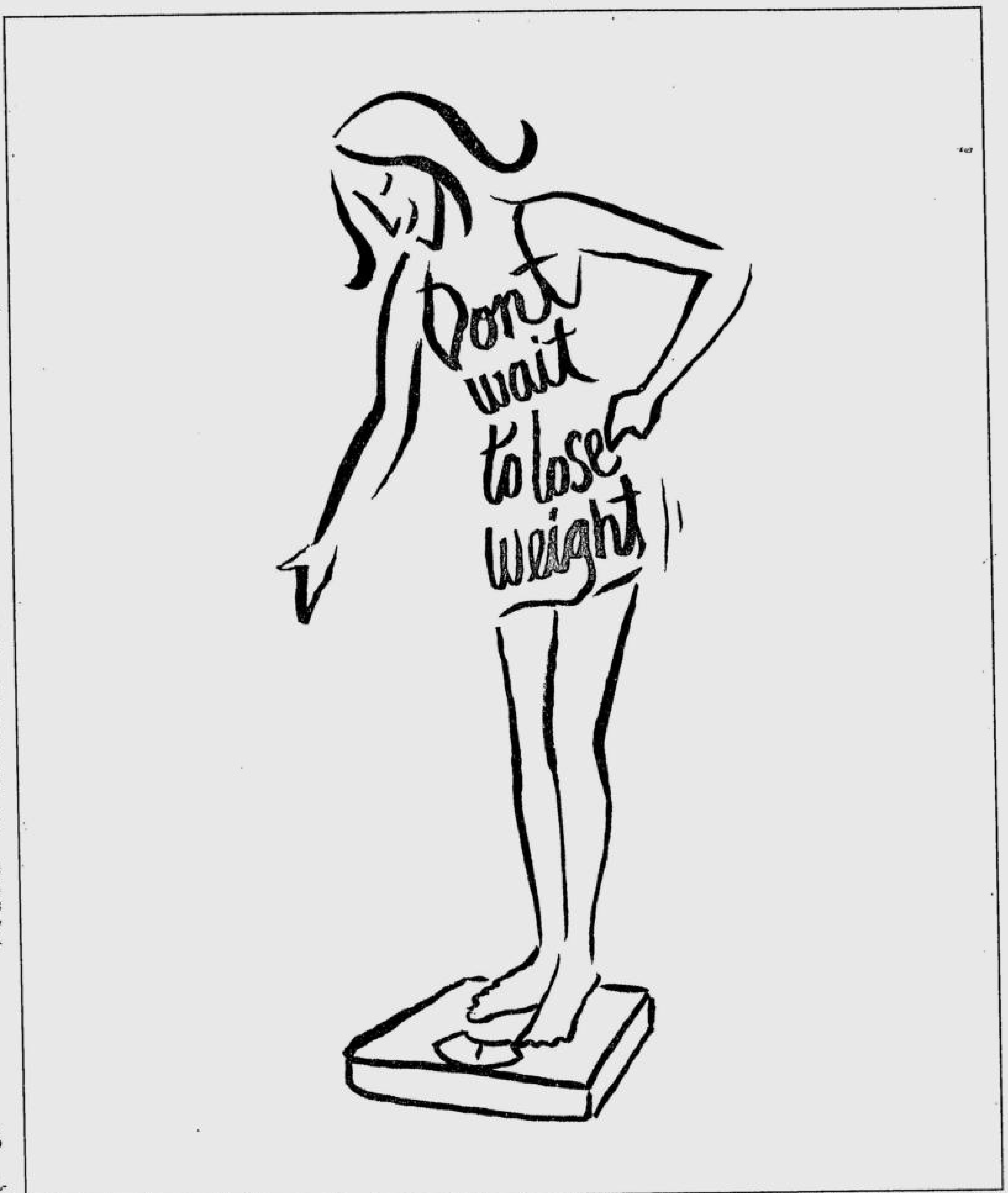
Judge Reynaldo Alon of the La Carlota regional trial court branch 63 reversed his earlier decision canceling the certificates of land ownership award (CLOA) of the farmer beneficiaries at the Hacienda Velez-Malaga, citing a recent Supreme Court ruling that regional trial courts have no jurisdiction in such cases.

"It is then incumbent that the order issued by this court is null and void and of no force and effect," Alon said in his decision dated Dec. 15 but signed only on Jan. 17.

The reinstated CLOA covers 144 hectares of the 446-ha Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana City owned by Roberto Cuenca.

Cuenca has been contesting his landholdings being placed under the coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform program since 1996, getting in the way of the farm workers being given the CLOA to the land.

In September 2004, the Supreme Court ruled with finality that trial courts have no jurisdiction over agrarian reform cases, compelling local courts to dismiss cases related to CARP.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Holcim

Celebrating Filipino Ingenuity

January 20, 2006, Holcim Philippines opens "Celebrating Filipino Ingenuity", an exhibit to pay tribute to the Filipino winners and participants in the Holcim Awards for Sustainable Construction.

Launched in 2004, the Holcim Awards for Sustainable Construction is the global competition of the Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction in search of the best approaches in sustainable construction. The foundation was established in 2003, aimed at furthering the discussion of sustainable construction among architects, urban planners, engineers, and building owners, and at recognizing exemplary building projects.

The awards ceremony for the Asia Pacific region was held in Beijing, September 2005. The Philippines proudly garnered two awards: Holcim Awards Silver for a project involving Concrete Substrates for Accelerated Coral Restoration, and Holcim Awards Encouragement for an Ivatan Agricultural Campus, Itbayat, Philippines. A total of 21 entries were submitted by the Philippines.

The exhibit formally opens at 4:00 p.m. at the Ground Floor, Glorietta 3, Ayala Center, Makati and will run until January 22.

On January 21 at 1:00 PM, an on-the-spot art contest for children aged 6 to 16 will be held, with the theme "Working with Mother Nature". Please bring crayons or oil pastels.

For more information please contact 0917 8052522 or 8700345.

Holcim foundation
for sustainable construction

House told: It takes two to Cha-cha

By TJ Burgonio

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CAN'T go it alone and will need the concurrence of the Senate to amend the 1987 Constitution under a constituent assembly.

The chair and members of the Consultative Commission (ConCom) spoke separately but expressed this common view when they appeared at the Senate initial hearing on proposed modes to rewrite the Charter.

"I believe in the Senate and House voting separately because it makes a lot of sense that in ordinary legislation either chamber has to vote separately, how much more on a very weighty matter of constitutional change?" said Dr. Jose Abueva, ConCom chair.

The commissioners shared Abueva's view, but cited different reasons.

The Senate committee on constitutional amendments opened its hearings on a House resolution convening Congress into a constituent assembly and a Senate resolution calling for a constitutional convention to study and approve changes to the Charter.

The chair, Sen. Richard Gordon, posed only one question to the resource persons: Can the House change the Constitution without the Senate?

"My very presence here speaks for itself. I believe we have a bicameral Congress and the Senate is part of the process," ConCom commissioner Jose Leviste Jr. said.

Rene Azurin, ConCom commissioner, argued that Congress, being bicameral, implied that "each House is separate, and it must vote on an issue independently."

Jose Villanueva, another commissioner, said that one only needed to look at the tradition of rewriting the country's Constitution to find that both chambers of Congress took part in it.

"I don't put so much importance as to whether the provision says voting separately. you look at tradition, you look at history, and you find out that in every instance where the fundamental law of the land was enacted, the two Houses always voted separately," he said.

Samson Rodriguez, another ConCom member, said that "there must be a concurrence of the Senate and a separate vote for purposes of proposing amendments to the Constitution if acting as a constituent assembly."

"We are unanimous and we believe, as a lawyer, there is no other interpretation but it should be voting separately," commissioner Anthony Acevedo said.

House position

Rep. Constantino Jaraula, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, had contended the House could introduce amendments without the Senate and comply with the three-fourths vote required by the Constitution to approve an amendment.

Under a constituent assembly, an amendment has to be approved by a three-fourths vote of Congress.

Gordon said that the ConCom's unanimous view that both chambers should approve amendments to the Constitution voting separately had erased all speculations spawned by the House position.

"What we achieved today is there's no longer the speculation that it's only the lower House which can do it themselves without the need of the Senate," he said after the hearing.

Raul Concepcion, chair of the Consumer and Oil Price Watch, and Commission on Elections director Alioden Dalaig also agreed with the ConCom's position.

Hero's burial ...

From page A1

intelligence readiness command, will award Maravillosa the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and a Meritorious Service Medal for her stint in Iraq, where she was assigned in the southern region of Kirkuk as an intelligence interrogator.

A natural linguist, the barely five-foot tall Maravillosa had endeared herself to her colleagues with her steely resolve and compassion.

She was in a convoy on Christmas Eve when it ran into a hail of rocket-propelled grenades. At least seven soldiers died in the attack, according to her mother Estelita Maravillosa, citing a report by the US military.

But only her daughter's body was recognizable, a miracle the mother attributed to the Roman Catholic medallions and crosses she had worn during her tour of duty.

The mother said her daughter was afraid of getting killed in Iraq but her deep sense of duty prevailed.

"Myla died for a cause. They (American government) respect her and she is a real hero," the tearful mother said.

Bible, not rifle

Sr. Margaret Michael, vocation director for the Daughters of Saint Paul that provided spiritual guidance to Myla, said in a letter to the soldier's family: "She said that as she carried her weapon that weekend, she could envision herself more with a Bible in hand, than a rifle."

Darlene Rodrigues, a Maravillosa cousin, said the clan was surprised when they learned of her service in Iraq. They knew she was afraid of dying there but she had no choice as an enlisted person.

"I think she died doing her duty. She is a person of integrity. But she was really afraid," Rodrigues said. "Maybe Myla died because God did not want her to kill anyone." *AFP*

Mike A lobby one reason Marcelo quit, says Salonga

From page A1

dent's controversial husband partly contributed to Marcelo's untimely retirement last November, Salonga told a forum on electoral reforms sponsored by the Black and White Movement at the Metro Club in Makati City.

Salonga, who heads KilosBayan and Bantay Katarungan, said he personally asked Marcelo last year about reports that the President's husband had inquired about cases pending at the office of the Ombudsman.

"I confronted him [Marcelo] by phone and later personally. He did not deny it," Salonga said, quoting Marcelo as saying, *"Kaya po gusto ko nang magresign dito. Hinihintay ko na lang and desisyon doon sa Erap case* (That's why I want to resign. I am just waiting for the decision on the Erap case)."

Citing health reasons, Marcelo resigned last Nov. 30, about two months after filing a two-page resignation letter to the President. He said that his work had left him "physically and mentally exhausted."

Feeling pain all over

Marcelo, who was named Ombudsman in October 2002, had complained about "feeling pain all over," according to colleagues interviewed by the INQUIRER. He had been suffering from ulcers and hypertensions.

As Ombudsman, Marcelo was supposed to serve until 2009.

Reached by the INQUIRER, Arroyo lawyer Jesus Santos declined immediate comment.

Marcelo, who was with the prosecution during President Jospeh Estrada's impeachment trial in 2000, was leading a team prosecuting the deposed leader for plunder. Under his watch, the Ombudsman was also prosecuting several officials, including several reportedly linked to the First Gentleman, who were involved in the overpriced President Diosdado Macapagal Avenue.

Pressed to give details about the alleged meddling at the Ombudsman by the President's husband, Salonga referred to the statement by Sen. Serge Osmeña days after Marcelo's resignation was announced—that Marcelo was being pressured to go lightly on former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

Overtaken by events

"Marcelo had wanted to do justice, but he was overtaken by events," Salonga said, adding that he also believed that at the time Marcelo resigned, the Ombudsman "was really very sick."

Perez has been under investigation on charges that he extorted $2 million from former Rep. Mark Jimenez in connection with a power project involving an Argentine firm. Jimenez also claimed he gave at least P8 million to a foundation belonging to the First Couple.

The Ombudsman is tasked to investigate corruption charges against government officials, and elevate the case for trial before the Sandiganbayan.

Hernando Perez case

Rumors about Malacañang exerting pressure on Marcelo circulated after he asked to resign last September. But Marcelo himself maintained he was loyal to Ms Arroyo.

Previous to Marcelo's resignation, the INQUIRER also ran a story about the Department of Justice's reluctance to request the Hong Kong government to release the documents pertinent to the filing of charges against Perez.

Perez had allegedly deposited $2 million with the Coutts Bank Hong Kong in February 2001. The amount was allegedly a bribe from the Impsa (Industrias Metalurgicas Pescarmona Sociedad Anomina), the Argentine firm that rehabilitated the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan (CBK) power plant complex in Laguna.

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Win or lose, we will fight, says family of rape victim

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

THE US EMBASSY'S REFUSAL TO turn over to Philippine authorities the four American servicemen charged with rape has only served to strengthen the resolve of the complainant and her family to see the case through.

"Kahit matalo, manalo, lalaban kami (Win or lose, we will fight)," the woman's mother yesterday told the INQUIRER by phone from Zamboanga City.

The mother said her daughter was "disheartened but undaunted" by the US Embassy's position.

"[But] we are not backing out of the fight, and the government should not as well," she said.

The mother also said they did not feel alone in their fight because private lawyers Katrina Legarda and Minerva Ambrosio had been continuing to make themselves available for legal advice.

"We are aware of the end of their services after the preliminary investigation," she said, adding that the termination of the lawyers' assistance was specified in the memorandum of agreement between the Child Justice League (CJL) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

The mother said her family had no ill feelings toward Legarda and company.

"They really helped ensure that those American soldiers were charged in court. We have big trust in Attorney Legarda's group," she said.

Legarda and company, members of the CJL, have pulled out of the case, saying their services only covered the preliminary investigation. They said their task was done when the soldiers were charged in court.

The complainant's uncle, a priest, is looking for a private lawyer, preferably a woman, to assist the team of Olongapo Prosecutor Prudencio Jalandoni.

"We have full trust in Prosecutor Jalandoni. We're putting in our private lawyer to provide balance," the mother said.

The complainant's family, who runs a restaurant business, has not received financial or other support from the government. But the mother said the family was not saying that they needed these forms of help.

"What we want is for the government to help us win this case," she said. "This is not just about my daughter's dignity. This is a matter of sovereignty—our justice system versus that of the US."

The complainant, through Legarda, had said she wanted all her abusers in jail, including their Filipino driver, Timoteo Soriano Jr.

Soriano, as well as two of the six original accused—Lance Corporal Albert Lara and Corporal Corey Burris—have been cleared of involvement in the alleged crime.

Angry lawmakers in Senate, House move to terminate VFA

From page A1

Korea has forged a similar agreement with the United States.

Bipartisan support has rapidly formed for the call on Tuesday of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago for the termination of the VFA, following the refusal of the US Embassy to surrender custody of the four US Marines charged with raping a 22-year-old Filipino woman.

House Deputy Minority Leader Satur Ocampo and other militant party-list lawmakers Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador and Liza Maza said they would back the concurrent resolution.

Ocampo said the US Embassy's stance on the issue of custody once more illustrated the United States' "arrogance as a superpower" and "the master-slave relationship between the US and Philippine governments."

Approval expected

The concurrent resolution is expected to be approved by the Lovfa—which is composed of seven senators and seven congressmen—when it meets this afternoon, Senate sources said.

It will have to be adopted by the Senate and the House before it is forwarded to President Macapagal-Arroyo for approval.

"I don't think there will be a problem gathering a majority vote in both chambers of Congress," Senator Santiago, who cochairs the Lovfa with Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco, said on Tuesday.

Cuenco, who chairs the House foreign affairs committee, yesterday said he agreed with the resolution "in principle."

"I agree with what Miriam said, but we should still pursue all diplomatic efforts. Failing that, we proceed [with the VFA's termination]," he said.

Only a review

At a briefing in Malacañang, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the Arroyo administration would hew strictly to the VFA and would "just move for a review of the [treaty] and undertake more diplomatic discussions."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said that while sovereignty was "non-negotiable," it was not an "absolute" and could be waived in "certain situations" particularly in this instance.

"Our jurisdiction to try this case can never be waived, but the custody may be waived. This case has not diminished our sovereignty, which is just one attribute of statehood," he said.

Gonzalez dismissed comparisons between the treaties forged by the Japanese and Philippine governments with the United States in trying criminal cases committed by US personnel in their respective countries.

"We have the same sovereignty as Japan, but our VFAs are different. You should ask the people who negotiated and ... ratified our VFA [why they allowed the US to retain custody]," he told reporters.

'Grossly onerous'

As early as November, Representatives Ocampo, Virador and Casiño (all of Bayan Muna) filed House Resolution No. 1008 seeking the immediate termination of the VFA that, they said, "undermines our national sovereignty and is grossly onerous for placing US interests over and above our primordial national interests."

Ocampo said HR 1008 could be "the kernel of the concurrent resolution."

Maza (Gabriela), on the other hand, filed HR 1070 urging Ms Arroyo to "uphold the dignity of Filipino women by asserting Philippine jurisdiction [over] and custody" of the US soldiers.

She said 30 lawmakers had endorsed HR 1070 for approval by the plenary.

"The approval of the resolution is urgent. In light of the US government's intransigence on the issue of custody, it's imperative that we take measures to assert our sovereignty and show our determination to expedite justice," Maza said.

Abrogation

At a press conference, Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon (LP, Muntinlupa), vice chair of the House defense committee, warned that only the President could abrogate a treaty such as the VFA.

"It's an act of the executive. Congress or the oversight committee can only recommend," said Biazon, who added that he found no logical reason for the US refusal to relinquish custody save for "US pride."

But Rep. Juan Edgardo Angara (LDP, Aurora) said Ms Arroyo having the last say on any treaty was "not a settled view."

According to Angara, a law graduate of Harvard University, one view says Senate concurrence is necessary to abrogate a treaty. And since the treaty has "the force and effect of a statute (law)," Congress should pass a similar law to scrap it, he said.

"The other view is that the President controls foreign policy," Angara said. "The Senate can no longer unilaterally withdraw its concurrence if the President does not agree with the recommendation of Congress."

To fuse the two views, Angara said, both chambers of Congress should pass a resolution urging the President to withdraw from the treaty.

But the treaty will remain valid for 180 days, he said.

Diplomatic action

Administration lawmakers condemned the US position.

In a joint statement, Rep. Exequiel Javier of Antique, vice chair of the House committee on justice, and Rep. Edwin Uy of Isabela, chair of the House committee on bases conversion and development, said Malacañang should "consider immediate diplomatic action against the US."

"The US Embassy's refusal to hand over the four Marines shows their disrespect for Philippine laws and sovereignty. It shows the US does not trust our justice system," said Javier, adding:

"They've already violated the rights of our 22-year-old compatriot. We should not allow them to violate our national dignity. They cannot just bully us."

Uy said that since the rape case was filed, the Philippine government had been "too cautious ... so as to prevent any diplomatic row with the US."

Humiliating

"But the US refusal to surrender the servicemen leaves us no choice but to protest the action. We cannot allow them to humiliate our people and country," he said.

Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran expressed his "indignation of the highest degree" at the US Embassy, which, he said, had been engaged in "a brazen mockery of the Philippine legal system."

"Worse, it is our own government that is pulling the wool over our eyes," he said.

According to Beltran, there is no justice in the Department of Justice, and the Department of Foreign Affairs "represents, not the Philippines, but another country." *With a report from Gil Cabacungan Jr.*

An Appreciation For An Enriching Partnership

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RP, US ...

From page A1

the US Embassy, the Philippine National Police and the SBMA (Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority). A request was made then."

The VFA provision in question is in Section 6, Article 5: "The custody of any US personnel over whom the Philippines is to exercise jurisdiction shall immediately reside with the US military authorities, if they so request, from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings."

Ironic twist

It was the same provision the US Embassy cited on Monday when it turned down the Philippine government's Nov. 16 request to gain custody of the accused on grounds that the alleged rape was an extraordinary case."

In an ironic twist, the Philippine government ended up being the party making a "request" for custody—the term the DFA has been using when referring to its diplomatic note to the US mission.

On hindsight, a DFA official said the SBMA authorities should primarily be blamed for the government's loss in the two-month-long custody battle.

"Had they waited for the DFA's or DOJ's (Department of Justice's) views on the matter, we could have denied the US request right there and then," the official, who asked not to be named, wryly noted.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, January 19, 2006
2nd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	1 S 18:6-9; 19:1-7
Gospel:	Mark 3:7-12

Jesus and his disciples withdrew to the lakeside and a large crowd from Galilee followed him. A great number of people also came from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, Transjordan and from the region of Tyre and Sidon, for they had heard of all that he was doing.

Because of the crowd, Jesus told his disciples to have a boat ready for him, to prevent the people from crushing him. He healed so many that all who had diseases kept pressing towards him to touch him. Even the people who had evil spirits, whenever they saw him, would fall down before him and cry out, "You are the Son of God."

But he warned them sternly not to tell anyone who he was.

Commentary

David's popularity grows and so does Saul's jealousy of him. Saul's son Jonathan warns his friend David of Saul's intent to kill him, and sends him into hiding, to speak on his behalf. Jonathan pleads for David and Saul relents. David is brought back to serve the king once more. And Jesus' popularity grows apace with the stories of his healings and encounters with the scribes and Pharisees. The crowds push in on him, wanting to touch him. And some cry out that he is the Son of God—those who are deranged, with mental illness or soul-sick and they are ordered to be silent. No one knows him truly and the popularity will pass and they will seek to kill him.

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GMA foes take ...

From page A1

man, Quezon City.

A project of the Gloria Step Down! Movement, Youth Dare, Gabriela-Youth and other groups, it featured a collection of clothes that depicted issues confronting the nation, such as poverty, labor migration, killing of political activists and journalists, child labor, the alleged rape of a Filipino woman by US servicemen, Hacienda Luisita and the campaign for a P125 wage increase.

Issue-oriented

Against a backdrop of construction equipment and streamers, 12 professional models joined 15 militants on the ramp, wearing flamboyant protest attires.

One model wore a slinky gown designed like the Philippine flag, topped by a golden sun headdress, oddly reminiscent of the American Statue of Liberty. Her hands were bound by a long metal chain which also served as a shawl.

Another model strutted about in a fiery red robe awash in flowers. She forcefully tugged it open to reveal an all-black dress, a subtle portrayal of a woman's rape.

Still another dressed like a construction worker, complete with a hard hat and a garbage bag slung over his shoulder. Inside his clothes were empty packets of instant noodles.

Despite the strong political overtones, the fashion show was a showcase of youthful style, design and expression, according to organizers.

Many faces of oppressed

Though the professional models had more poise and experience, the youth leaders got the loudest screams in the packed hall, as they strutted, unsmiling, in front of blinking lights and flashing cameras.

Dennis Maga, spokesperson of the Gloria Step Down! Movement, said the fashion show sought to present the "many different faces of the oppressed, from the laborers to the overseas Filipino workers."

The clothes were designed by Laurie Laine Maravilla, a 22-year-old UP clothing technology student, and members of the Philippine Academy of Fashion Designers, organizers said.

Maravilla said her design was Japanese-inspired, using basic colors, such as red, white and yellow.

The designers were asked to choose from several Philippine issues. Maravilla picked US militarization, child labor and workers' rights.

Child models

Two of her creations were modeled by a young girl and boy, who posed as a child prostitute and child soldier. The girl wore teased hair, exaggerated makeup and an assortment of mismatched secondhand clothes, while the boy sported a fatigue jacket and a metal chain for a belt.

Maravilla, however, said she did not know that the fashion show would be antigovernment. "Personally, I don't have a stand where ousting GMA (Ms Arroyo) is concerned, but I believe that the specific issues should really be fought for."

Youth Dare spokesperson Raymond Palatino said the idea was to capture the attention of more young people. "Through this activity, we want to sustain the protest atmosphere. We want to show that we are not running out of creative ways to protest against the Arroyo administration," he said.

The militant groups are calling for Ms Arroyo's ouster over allegations she conspired with former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to ensure her victory in the 2004 elections.

No turn-off

Even the title of the show was toned down to appeal to apathetic students, Palatino said. "We used 'Game Over Gloria' because some people might be turned off by 'Oust Gloria.'"

"Game Over Gloria" connotes youthful playfulness, but does not stray from its message seeking the President's removal from office, he said.

Youth Dare media officer Carl Marc Ramota said the show demonstrated the "crisis of legitimacy" haunting the Arroyo administration.

The groups were also involved in other creative protests, such as the "Hello Garci" computer games and "Googlebombing" the President's website.

Oakwood mutiny leader at it again

By Tarra V. Quismundo

LOOKING FOR ALL THE WORLD LIKE he were still leading a coup instead of being on trial for his role in the Oakwood mutiny, Lt. Sg. Antonio Trillanes IV used his latest court appearance to expound his views on the lingering political malaise.

Trillanes, whose loquaciousness was what many television viewers would remember of that day-long mutiny three years ago, called on Filipinos last Tuesday to decide the country's fate.

"It's time for all of us to decide which side we will take, whether we are for GMA [President Macapagal-Arroyo] or for change," Trillanes said, speaking to reporters in a mixture of English and Filipino.

"If you choose GMA, that means you are content with your situation now and that you can abide her until 2010 onwards," said the self-styled leader of the "Magdalo" coup plotters.

Trillanes met with reporters briefly after Judge Oscar Pimentel of the Makati Regional Trial Court's Branch 148 adjourned last Tuesday's hearing of the coup d'etat case against him and 30 other junior officers involved in the mutiny at the Oakwood Premier apartment-hotels in Makati City on July 27, 2003.

In a tone reminiscent of his defiance three years ago, Trillanes had these words for those he deemed apathetic to his cause: "That means they are waiving their stake in the future to those who would want to decide. When that happens, whatever is the outcome, they should just accept (it).... They have no right to complain because they have decided not to participate in that historic moment."

"If you choose change, it means you want, and you are hoping that your quality of life, and that of your fellow Filipinos, will be better.. or somehow you have hope that there will be peace and progress in our country," he said, adding: "Now, don't be afraid because whatever your decision may be, wherever the people will go, so will the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines). [The decision] is for the people to make."

"What they can expect from us is that we will do the right thing, that we will do what we have to," he added.

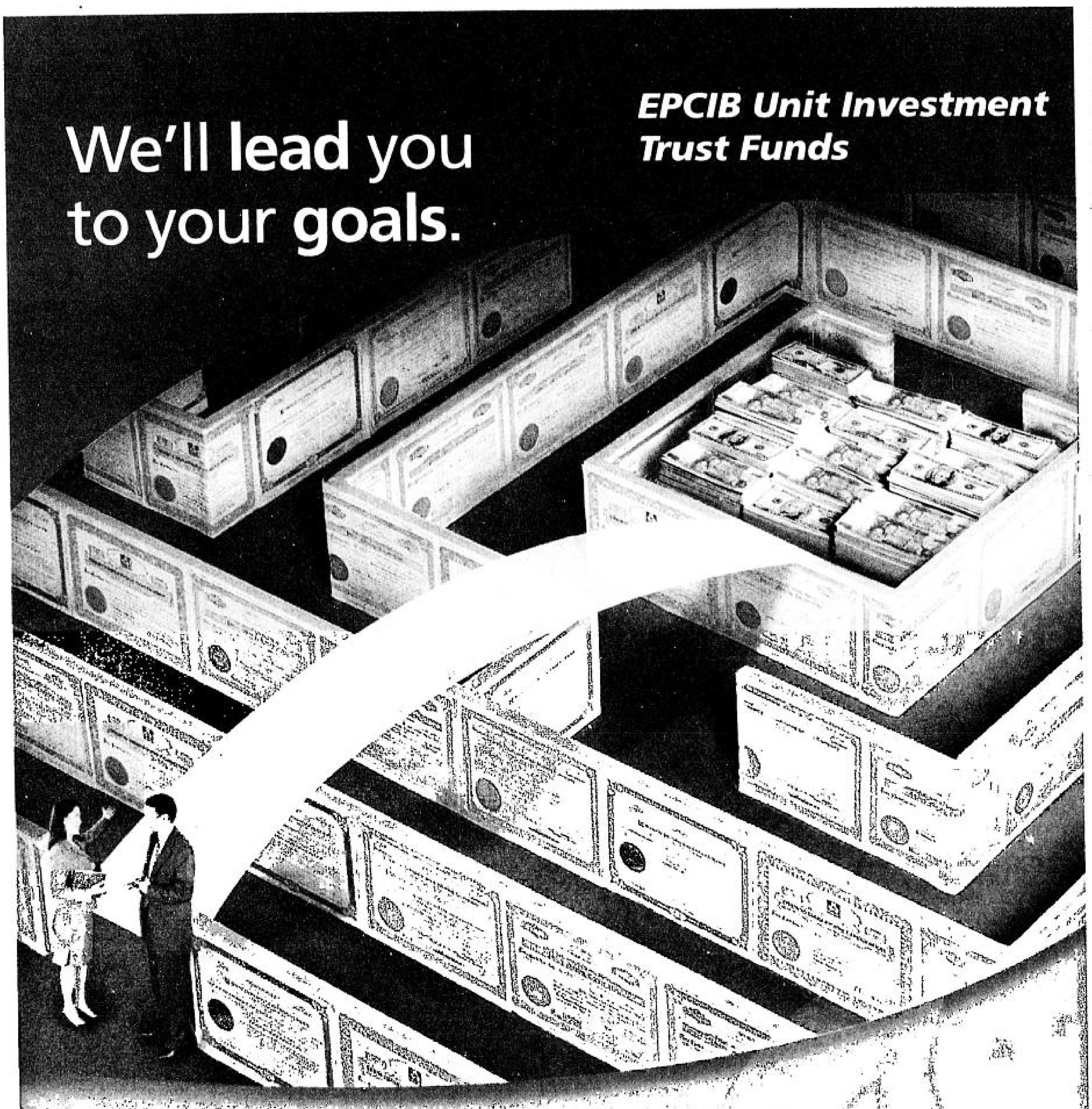
Tuesday's hearing was the first since Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon escaped his military guards after a postponed hearing at the Makati City justice hall on Dec. 14.

Hours after his news conference, four other junior officers accused with Trillanes, escaped from detention at Fort Bonifacio. *(See story on Page 1)*

Before meeting the media, Trillanes conferred with 20 of his fellow accused – those who remained behind him after a faction of mutineers, led by Army Captains Milo Maestrecampo and Gerardo Gambala, sent a letter to Ms Arroyo last September apologizing for their part in the failed coup and pledging loyalty to her.

Trillanes's group, including Army, Navy, and Air Force officers, were in full military uniform during the hearing and defense lawyer Ruel Pulido said this was a "show of solidarity." Maestrecampo's group were in plainclothes.

Asked if his remarks on Tuesday constituted a retraction of an earlier apology to the President, Trillanes replied, "The issue is more complicated than it looks so I leave that for another forum.."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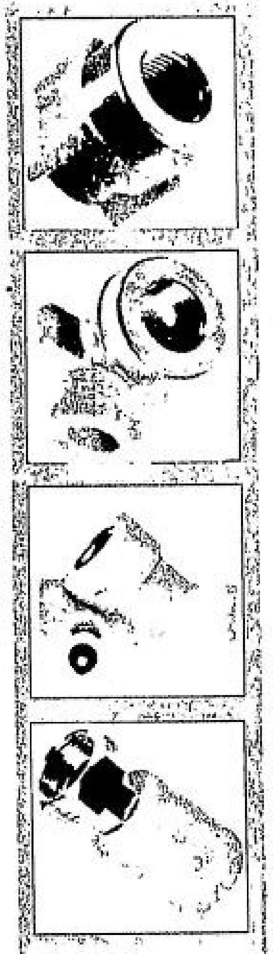

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Army knew of escape plan

From page A1

Roel Pulido had vigorously objected to the transfer on the grounds that only the Makati court can order the transfer. *(See related story on this page.)*

How the four officers managed to bolt from the CMU, which was under heavy guard, Esperon could not explain.

"We're looking at possible angles. What's important here is this occurred while one Attorney Pulido was negotiating at the detention center," the Army chief said at a news conference.

Pulido denial

Pulido said he left the CMU at around 7:30 p.m. after arguing for more than three hours with Fort Bonifacio camp commander, Brig. Gen. Ruben Rafael, and three other Army officials against the transfer that was not sanctioned by a court order.

The jailbreak came hours after Magdalo leader, Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, urged the nation to choose between status quo and change, *(See story on page A7)* and 34 days after another mutineer, Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, had escaped.

Hours after the escape, President Macapagal-Arroyo convened the Cabinet cluster on national security in Malacañang to discuss the matter.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez told the INQUIRER that during the meeting that started at 11 p.m. Tuesday and lasted till 3 a.m. yesterday, the President was "a little bit irritated" about the escape.

The police placed stations nationwide on their highest alert level near Tuesday midnight two hours after the escape.

The police have joined a manhunt for the renegade soldiers, described by the military as men who "could be dangerous." The military is also on full alert.

At the Palace, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita shrugged off speculation that the escape was part of another coup attempt.

The heightened alert of the military was "also normal," Ermita said, noting that the military had to take extra measures to prevent a similar occurrence.

Just escapees

Asked whether the four fugitives were a national security threat, Ermita said "at the moment they are just escapees."

But Esperon, who was also at the press conference, noted that the four officers had "excellent" field experiences and "could be dangerous."

Rabonza, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class '95, belonged to the elite Special Forces; San Juan, PMA Class '97, was with the Light Reaction Company; Bumindang, PMA Class '98, was with the Philippine Army Light Armor Regiment, and Sarmiento, PMA Class '98, was a company commander in the 1st Infantry Division.

The four officers are among 31 Magdalo leaders facing trial for allegedly herding roughly 300 soldiers in the July 27, 2003 takeover of the Oakwood Premier apartment-hotels in Makati City.

While the 31 had been granted bail by a civilian court, they remained in military custody, being among 96 other junior military officers who are facing court-martial proceedings.

Taking "full responsibility" for the escape, Esperon said he had relieved Rafael and ordered Army Inspector General Maj. Gen. Ferdinand Bocobo to investigate the circumstances of the escape and the liability of people securing them.

Civilian power

Asserting civilian power over the military, Pulido asked a Makati court yesterday to reprimand Esperon for moving Rabonza, San Juan and Sarmiento to another detention facility without a court order.

Barely a day after the escape, Pulido asked Makati RTC Branch 148 Judge Oscar Pimentel to cite Esperon for contempt.

"This very urgent motion is filed not only to seek punishment against those who so arrogantly ignore the power and jurisprudence of this court, but also to remind the military establishment that civilian authority still reigns supreme over the military," Pulido said in a motion.

Filed in the name of one of the accused, Capt. Alvin Ebreo, the motion said Esperon's order to isolate the four officers from the rest of the Magdalo soldiers detained at the CMU was a defiance of court rules.

The motion also said that the transfer was "a direct contravention" of a commitment order from the court dated Nov. 18, 2003, which placed San Juan, Sarmiento and Rabonza, along with 14 other soldiers, under Intelligence Security Group (ISG) custody. The commitment order was issued by Makati RTC Branch 61 Judge Romeo Barza, whose sala previously handled the case.

Pulido related in the pleading that on Tuesday afternoon, one of the four soldiers informed him that they were to be transferred to the ISG compound, and that a certain Major Baluyan "threatened" them that "they would be bodily carried to the intelligence compound if they refused to move."

The lawyer said that upon his arrival at the CMU to check on his clients, four Army officers whom he identified as General Rafael, Colonel Fajardo, Major Baluyan and a certain Major Tolentino told him that Esperon had ordered them to transfer the four soldiers.

"The act of the military authorities is a clear defiance of authority, justice, or dignity of the court, as it tends to bring the authority and administration of law into disrespect," the motion cited.

The motion was set for hearing on Jan. 23. The coup d'etat trial would continue on Jan. 31. *With reports from Luige A. del Puerto, Philip Tubeza and Jocelyn Uy*

TIMELINE

Jan. 17, 2006

8:30 a.m.—Oakwood mutineers arrive at the Makati RTC under heavy guard

9 a.m.—Coup d'etat case hearing starts

11:30 a.m.—Court hearing adjourns

12 noon—Magdalo Group spokesperson Navy Lt. s.g. Antonio Trillanes IV issues statement to media

12:30 p.m.—Oakwood mutineers leave Makati RTC

3 p.m.—Lawyer Roel Pulido gets text message about commotion at Fort Bonifacio ISG compound

4 p.m.—Pulido arrives at Fort Bonifacio; sees Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza, 1st Lts. Lawrence San Juan, Sonny Sarmiento, Patricio Bumindang Jr. at the Custodial Management Unit; it was the last time he saw the four.

Camp commander Brig. Gen. Ruben Rafael, 3 other Army officials enter into argument with Pulido over planned transfer to another ISG building

7:30 p.m.—Pulido leaves Fort Bonifacio; soldiers enter ISG compound

8 p.m.—Pulido arrives at Makati law office, prepares court memorandum, gives interview with TV reporters about Army transfer

9 p.m.—TV reporters leave Pulido's office

9 p.m.—Army discovers escape of Rabonza, San Juan, Sarmiento, Bumindang

9:30 p.m.—Pulido informed over phone by one of TV reporters he just talked to about escape

11 p.m.—Reports of escape reaches media; Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. confirms escape but would not give details yet; Army officials in meeting

12 midnight—Army spokesperson Maj. Bartolome Bacarro sends media advisory through text confirming escape

Jan. 18, 2006

1 a.m.—Bacarro gives press conference at Fort Bonifacio

8 a.m.—Esperon gives press conference at Fort Bonifacio

Esperon embarrassed but he's not quitting

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

HE MIGHT BE RED-FACED from having five escapees in a little over a month under his watch, but Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon is not about to step down.

"I am embarrassed by this situation and I am taking full responsibility for it. But I do not think it calls for resignation from the post. I'd like to believe it is not cause for concern," said Esperon at a briefing 17 hours after four junior officers belonging to the Magdalo group were believed to have bolted their cells in Fort Bonifacio.

Last Dec. 14, Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon escaped from his guards and has since taunted the military with his antigovernment Internet blogs and videos.

His ground commander, Brig. Gen. Ruben Rafael, has taken the fall for the jailbreak Tuesday night.

"I am pinning my commander on the ground and I have in fact relieved him from the position. Brig. Gen. Ruben Rafael himself approached me and admitted to the mistake and volunteered to be relieved. I appreciate that," Esperon said.

Esperon could not give a full accounting of how the mutineers escaped from their guards and cell, except that they piled up several chairs to scale the fence. "I have partial report on where they passed but I don't think the details could really help now. What we can tell you is they escaped," he said.

Magdalo lawyer, senators don't buy …

From page A1

a failure in the implementation of the operational unit," Biazon said. "However, if they are being hidden, why are they being hidden?"

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., the committee vice chair, warned that the escape might be part of coordinated moves to stage another mutiny against the administration, noting that it came hours after Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV called on the public to choose whether to support President Macapagal-Arroyo or change.

Trillanes said that if the public chose change, the armed forces would support them.

As of press time, Pulido said he had not heard from his clients who supposedly escaped from a Fort Bonifacio detention center Tuesday night.

Pulido represents Army 1st Lieutenants Lawrence San Juan, Sonny Sarmiento and Patricio Bumindang Jr.

Army Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza is represented by former Sen. Rene Saguisag.

Saguisag also expressed fear for the lives of the four junior officers.

Saguisag, in an interview with reporters at the Sandiganbayan yesterday, said he had not received any word from any of the four junior officers, especially from his client, Rabonza.

He said the situation was quite unusual because Rabonza while in detention had been able to communicate with him.

"Now that they are free men, if they have really escaped as the military claims, then the more they should be able to communicate with us with ease," Saguisag said.

Saguisag wondered how the four junior officers could have escaped from Fort Bonifacio unless they had the support of people working at the camp.

When Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon escaped from military custody on the morning of Dec. 14 last year, he called up Pulido in the afternoon to apologize.

Pulido said he would only believe that the four officers had escaped if they themselves told him so.

No word from clients

As of yesterday afternoon, even the families did not hear from the four officers.

"If we don't hear from them, we will file a petition for habeas corpus (today)," he said.

Interviewed on Tuesday midnight, Pulido said he could not believe the four officers have escaped. "I am concerned about their safety."

Yesterday, Pulido recounted that when he left the Intelligence Security Group compound around 7:30 p.m., several soldiers entered the compound apparently to take custody of the four officers.

Pulido argued for more than three hours with Army officials, objecting to the Army's plan to transfer Rabonza et al. to another detention center without a prior court order.

With Pulido at the time were some relatives of the officers concerned.

"They were afraid. There were so many soldiers in the area. We were just at the entrance. When I left, the soldiers went in," Pulido said.

Lawyer an accomplice?

Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. yesterday insinuated that Pulido was an accomplice in the escape.

"The allegation that the escape of Captain Rabonza et al. is theatrics orchestrated by the Army is bereft of truth. Such allegation by one Attorney Pulido is in fact meant to cover his possible complicity in the escape," Esperon said at a news conference.

Pulido said he found Esperon's charges at first amusing "because he and the four officials I spoke to last night know that's not true."

He said he was contemplating filing charges against Esperon unless he retracted his statement.

"By saying that, he's scaring off lawyers. Lawyers have a job to do in accordance with law. He should not be threatening us," Pulido said.

For 7 months, FBI clueless on Fil-Am …

From page A1

And records show he carried debt of at least a half-million dollars—on Marine retirement pay and an entry-level FBI salary.

But for at least seven months, the FBI that makes catching spies its No. 2 mission after fighting terrorism missed signs of espionage in its own ranks—again.

Safeguards the FBI had put in place after it was rocked by the Robert Hanssen spy scandal in 2001 failed to raise red flags about Aragoncillo's activities, according to interviews and court papers reviewed by The Associated Press.

After the FBI in 2001 arrested Hanssen, who admitted spying for Moscow for cash and diamonds over two decades, the agency was instructed to adopt tough new safeguards to catch spies in its ranks. "We've moved to address that," FBI Director Robert Mueller promised in April 2002.

It took outside help—US customs officials separately developed suspicions about Aragoncillo—to alert the FBI. The bureau soon discovered he was sending sensitive US intelligence assessments about the Philippines' government to Filipino opposition leaders, court records say.

Former President Joseph Estrada, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez have acknowledged they had received e-mail from either Aragoncillo or former Senior Supt. Michael Ray Aquino.

Aquino, a former aide of Lacson's, was arrested along with Aragoncillo in the United States last September for allegedly stealing government secrets.

One stolen document described President Macapagal-Arroyo, a US ally in the war on terror, as "a weak reactive leader" with an "overbearing personal style." The report was labeled an "informal assessment by a senior USG (US government) policymaker." Ms Arroyo has demanded an explanation from the US Embassy.

FBI waited

Those who helped the FBI after Hanssen's deadly betrayal to Russia are astonished that Aragoncillo appeared to exploit some of the same weaknesses that were supposed to have been fixed.

"I don't know why they had to wait until somebody turned him in," said former Attorney General Griffin B. Bell, a member of the panel that investigated FBI security after Hanssen. "They should have been policing their systems. The question is, how could he get by that long?"

Rep. Jane Harman, whose House intelligence committee received a classified briefing on Aragoncillo, agreed. "Bells and whistles should have gone on some place, and they didn't," she said.

The FBI acknowledged it did not suspect Aragoncillo until the tipoff from Customs but said it eventually would have detected its analyst's behavior.

"I'm confident our security procedures would have picked this up," said Leslie Wiser Jr., head of the FBI's New Jersey office and a lead investigator in the 1994 spy case against CIA officer Aldrich Ames. "I'm glad we didn't have to wait for that; we'll take it any way we can."

Under review

The justice department inspector general has told Congress he was reviewing the adequacy of the FBI's spy-catching techniques even before Aragoncillo's arrest. That probe is continuing.

Aragoncillo's lawyers and prosecutors are trying to wrap up a plea deal that would secure a guilty plea and his cooperation. Prosecutors have said Aragoncillo has "essentially admitted" to taking classified documents.

The 47-year-old Aragoncillo was born in the Philippines and became a naturalized US citizen in 1991. He served 21 years in the Marines, ultimately as a gunnery sergeant. He worked at the White House on the security detail for Vice Presidents Al Gore and Dick Cheney between 1999 and 2002 before joining the FBI as a civilian intelligence analyst at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

Aragoncillo is not charged with espionage, which carries a maximum penalty of capital punishment, as plea discussions continue. Instead, he's charged in court papers with conspiring to reveal government secrets, acting as a foreign agent and improperly using FBI computers. Those charges carry a maximum of 25 years.

Aragoncillo declined on three occasions through his lawyer, US public defender Chester Keller, to speak with the Associated Press.

Prosecutors have not identified a motive for Aragoncillo, except to say that he was deeply in debt and appeared loyal to Estrada. In one e-mail message cited in court records, Aragoncillo allegedly wrote to the former President, "I would rather you take over, if the Constitution would suggest."

'101 classified documents'

By the time FBI agents arrested him, Aragoncillo had downloaded at least 101 classified documents related to the Philippines, officials said.

It wasn't supposed to happen that way.

No alarms

But despite similarities to Hanssen, Aragoncillo's activities failed to trigger alarms with any of the FBI's new computer monitoring, financial checks, polygraph tests and rules on foreign travel.

Paul Moore, who shared a carpool with Hanssen when both worked at FBI headquarters, said he never suspected his coworker was a Russian spy. Inside the FBI, Moore said, "suspicion isn't automatic. You tend to find explanations for anomalous behavior." *AP*

Excerpts from e-mails, documents in espionage case

SOME QUOTES IN THE CASE against an FBI intelligence analyst, Leandro Aragoncillo, 47, of Woodbury, New Jersey:

- "Sir, the other day Leandro 'Lean' Aragoncillo called me. … He wants to talk to you and give you some updates on the political situation in the country."—**E-mail allegedly sent in January 2005 by Michael Ray Aquino, a former senior Philippine police official, to Filipino opposition Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, Aquino's former boss.**
- "I find all the information that you are sending me very useful. I hope you will continue sending more."—**E-mail allegedly sent in January 2005 from Lacson to Aragoncillo.**
- "By no means would you show this information … I will be affected severely. Again, please protect the source—Me."—**E-mail allegedly sent in August 2005 from Aragoncillo to former Philippine President Joseph Estrada.**
- "There is significant risk of disappearance because of the significant penalties faced if convicted of the offenses charged, the strength of the existence of the commission of these very serious offenses involving the misappropriate (sic) and theft of classified information, frequent travel and ties outside the United States, the existence of significant debt and questionable employment status. All of these facts show the defendant has the motive, means and wherewithal to flee and not appear at future proceedings."—**US Magistrate Judge Patty Shwartz.**
- "While Estrada espouses a champion of the poor image, he is no choirboy. Another fact of his character is his 'machismo' persona, that of a heavy drinking, pugilist and playboy .:. He has been openly ridiculed for scandalous behavior, including siring seven illegitimate children." Estrada "remains an influential wildcard in Philippine politics."—**From a four-page classified US government report dated August 2005.**
- Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo "is a weak reactive leader whose technocratic leanings, oligarchical upbringing, overbearing personal style and inability to connect with ordinary Filipinos have kept her popularity ratings low in a country that reveres warm and outgoing personalities." Her election "was tainted by credible rumors of corruption and vote-buying, leaving her legitimacy once again in question following her rise to power."—**From a three-page classified US government report dated July 2005.**
- Philippine Vice President Noli de Castro "fumbled expressions and some mistakes in grammar … We inquired about the biography of Rudy Giuliani sitting atop a small stack of books on De Castro's desk and he said that it was a gift and he hadn't read it … There is no indication De Castro has much knowledge or interest in foreign policy issues … On Iraq, however, he said he didn't understand 'what was behind it."—**From a five-page classified FBI intelligence assessment dated July 2005.**
- "Many view (De Castro) as a substantive lightweight," and his biggest liabilities include "weak language skills. His speechmaking even in Tagalog has not won rave reviews, either." De Castro is "not afraid to call senior ABS-CBN (Philippine media) members via cell phone on a moment's notice and ask questions about news coverage and foreign affairs."—**From a six-page classified US government document dated May 2005.**
- "An aide to Macapagal-Arroyo told us they already have identified most of the activists who might be pulling strings and weaving plots, and are keeping them under close surveillance … It is certainly in Filipino's interest to upend the Macapagal-Arroyo government and also put an end to the judicial cases against Estrada."—**From a two-page classified US government document dated April 2005.** *AP*

PartidoLiberal
60 Years
Anniversary

HONORING AND CELEBRATING OUR TRADITIONS

"Leading the Way of Reforms Toward a Liberating Society"

Six decades ago, our forebears founded a political party that has brought honor and pride to our country and people. Today, we have come to celebrate the Liberal Party's 60th Founding Anniversary, symbolizing a new beginning and signifying renewal as well as change.

We also join hands in gratitude and respect for our great Liberal forebears whose vigor, character and devotion to our country have enriched our party, won the respect of countless Filipinos and bequeathed a legacy of lifetime service and bravery that shall put us in imperishable pages in the history of the republic and of the party.

The torch has been passed to us the new generation of Liberals–proud of our heritage and unwilling to permit or witness the slow undoing of our most cherished human rights to which our forebears were so steadfastly committed. Conscious effort must be expended in seeing that our party remains leashed to its original purposes. Let us take care that our party does not establish a hegemony that is destructive and independent of the reforming impulse that gave birth to the liberal ideals. United, there is little we cannot do; divided, there is little that we can do, for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

The strength of the party lies in its members and principles. I believe that through these principles, we will be heard; in being heard, we will be understood; and in being understood, we will be accepted.

Long live the Liberal Party!

FRANKLIN M. DRILON
Senate President
President, Liberal Party

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Anniversary Celebration Chairman
Senator Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan
Anniversary Celebration Co-Chairman
Former Secretary Florencio "Butch" Abad
Head, Anniversary Task Force
Concepcion "Chit" Asis

Schedule of Activities

Thursday, January 19, 2006

9:00 a.m.
Advancing the Gains of Liberal Democracy in Asia:
Regional Conference on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Liberal Party
Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City

1:00 p.m.
Launching of the book, The Dilemma of Philippine Campaign Politics: Alternative Campaign Strategies in the 2004 National Elections, by the Ateneo School of Government.
Dusit Hotel Nikko; Makati City

3:00 p.m.
Manila Anniversary Celebration
LP Manila Chapter Leaders
Plaza Miranda, Quiapo, Manila

Friday, January 20, 2006

10:00 a.m.
Opening of Exhibit and launch of Liberal Chronicles:
60 Years of the Liberal Party, 1946-2006
Ali Mall, Cubao, Q.C.

Whole Day
Celebrations among the local Chapters of the LP

10:00 a.m.
INAUGURATION OF LP PROV'L. HQ
Guest Cong. Ruffy Biazon
Benguet

9:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m.
MEDICAL MISSION
Cagayan

9:00 a.m.
LIBERAL FORUM ON CHARTER CHANGE
Speaker: Gov. Victor Ortega
La Union

8:00 a.m. 12:00 noon
TREE PLANTING and Youth General Assembly
Naga City

8:00 a.m. 12:00 noon
MEDICAL MISSION in Alabang
Muntinlupa City

8:00 am 12:00 nn
Distribution of Dome Tents to All Public Schools (3^{rd} Dist, QC) and Free ECG
Barangay Escopa 1, Quezon City

10:00 a.m.
MEDIA FORUM
CARAGA/Butuan City

10:00 a.m.
Presscon and Media Blitz
Davao City

Saturday, January 21, 2006

11:00 a.m.
Testimonial Luncheon for Fmr. Sen. Pres. Jovito R. Salonga, Chairman Emeritus, LP
Kalayaan Hall, Club Filipino Greenhills, San Juan, M.M.

Monday, 23 January 2006

2:00 p.m.
Awarding Ceremony for winners of "The Filipino as a Liberal" Essay Writing Contest and launch of compilation of essays
Balay Kalinaw, UP Diliman, Q.C.

Donors pledge $1.9B to fight bird flu

BEIJING—AN INTERNATIONAL BIRD FLU CONference was hailed a major success after it wrapped up Wednesday with donor countries and organizations pledging $1.9 billion to fight the killer virus.

The figure far surpassed the $1.5 billion target of the two-day International Pledging Conference on Avian and Human Influenza in Beijing attended by officials from half the nations on the planet.

"It was a conference of commitment and pledging that really showed solidarity," the UN's coordinator on avian and human influenza, David Nabarro, told reporters at the end of the conference.

"We've got a fantastic set of pledges from poor countries as well as rich countries.

"Even countries that cannot put money into the funding are saying we are going to commit our people and our governments to get the results." The European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Safety, Markos Kyprianou, said nearly $1 billion had been pledged in grants, which would go mainly to low-income countries in Southeast Asia and Africa.

The other $900 million would come in loans, he said.

The United States was the biggest donor, pledging $334 million, followed by the European Union (EU), which said it would offer $260 million. Within the EU, $138 million will come directly from the 25 member states while the European Commission will deliver another $121 million.

Japan committed $159 million to the global fight, while Russia pledged $4.9 million and Australia committed itself to $41.7 million.

China, which co-hosted the event along with the World Bank and the European Commission, pledged 10 million dollars.

The higher-than-expected pledges came after the conference was told repeatedly of the immense dangers for the world posed by the bird flu virus, which has killed around 80 people since reemerging in 2003.

With the virus spreading from Asia to the Middle East and now to Europe in the past year, the world feared bird flu could become a pandemic that could kill millions. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan told the conference via video link that the world was not prepared for a pandemic and called for major efforts in stepping up preparations.

"There's no time to waste. Lets ensure we're ready. We are not yet there," Annan said. "To be truly prepared we would need to mount a tremendous effort." With the disease killing four people in Turkey this month, the first deaths outside Southeast Asia and China, the conference heard that the virus was capable of spreading easily across borders. "All countries can be affected if a pandemic occurs," World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz said in a televised speech.

"All countries share responsibilities to fight the spread of the disease and to put human and financial resources behind the effort." Officials said the next step was to assess funding proposals from the needy countries and set up a system to ensure the money is well spent to implement a three-year action plan laid out at the first donors' conference in Geneva in November.

The plan aims to keep bird flu from moving from its current form, which is mainly transmitted from poultry to humans, to one that is transmissible among humans.

Most of the money will be spent on launching public awareness programs, strengthening outbreak detection and response, disinfection, slaughter and vaccination of poultry, and compensation for farmers. *AFP*

Pope's attacker may be sent back to jail

ANKARA—MEHMET ALI AGCA, THE man who shot pope John Paul II in 1981, faced a possible return to jail after Turkey's justice minister on Tuesday sought to overturn a court decision freeing him after a quarter-century.

Justice Minister Cemil Cicek formally requested that a court overturn the decision to release Agca, after weeks of raging debate on whether the 48-year-old former hitman had served less time than he should for crimes he committed in Turkey before his release on Thursday.

After nearly 25 years in jail, most of it in Italy, Agca was set free thanks to sentence reductions in the form of a series of amnesties and other reductions foreseen in the penal code, but experts say deductions from his jail term have been miscalculated.

In his letter to the appeals court, carried by the Anatolia news agency, Cicek argued against a court decision to deduct the time Agca served in Italy from his Turkish jail sentence.

He also added that the deduction was made on the grounds that Agca had served 20 years in Italy, for the attack on the pope, when in fact he had served only 19 years and one month.

The minister said that Agca still had to serve a reduced 10-year sentence for the 1979 murder of a prominent journalist, arguing that the said sentence could not have been deducted from his overall jail time.

The former extreme right-wing militant "has not earned the right to parole," Cicek said.

Former justice minister Hikmet Sami Turk, who oversaw Agca's extradition from Italy in 2000, said he should have remained in jail until 2012 even with the most generous calculation of his sentence reductions.

Agca's lawyer Mustafa Demirbag, however, claims his client should in fact have been released earlier than Jan. 12.

Touted in the press as the country's most notorious killer, Agca was released from a high-security prison in Istanbul on Thursday to a hero's welcome laid out by his supporters and a furious public outcry.

He had been incarcerated in Turkey following his extradition from Italy where he served 19 years for his assassination attempt on the pope on May 13, 1981. He shot and seriously wounded John Paul II. The pontiff later visited him in prison and publicly forgave him.

In Turkey, Agca was sentenced to seven years for two armed robberies in the 1970s and was also supposed to serve a reduced 10-year sentence for murdering prominent Turkish journalist Abdi Ipekci, the chief editor and columnist of the liberal daily Milliyet, in 1979.

But he was released after serving only five and a half years due to the series of sentence reductions.

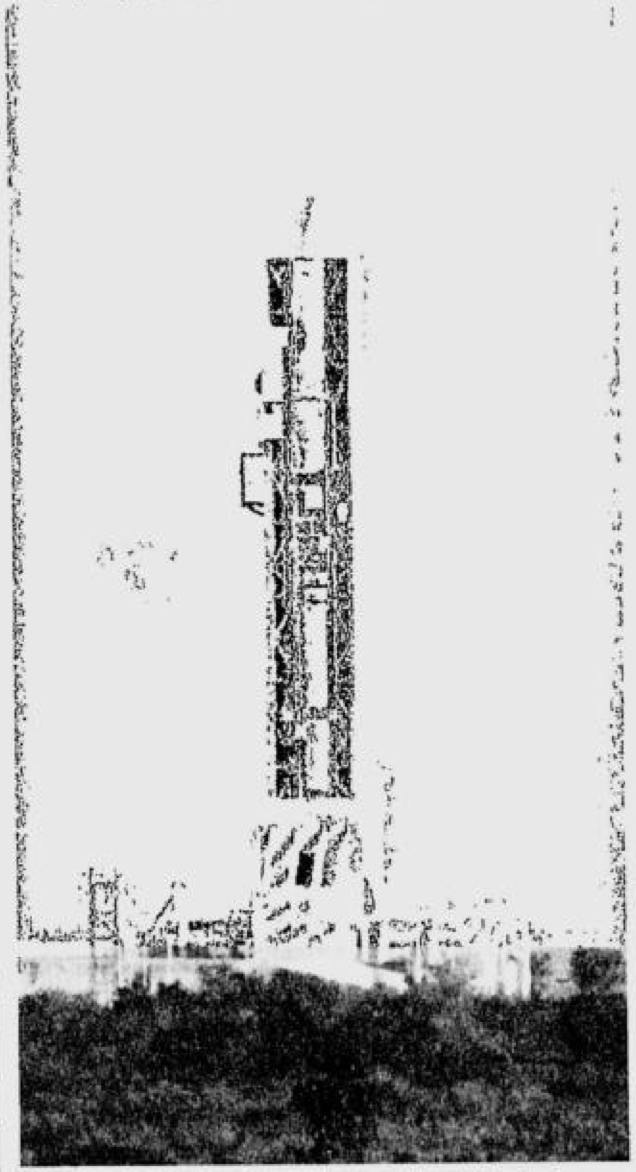
On Wednesday, a Turkish military hospital declared Agca unfit for military service, which is obligatory for all Turkish men over 18.

The hospital did not say why Agca had been declared unfit.

Agca's attorney Demirbag said the hospital had decided against recruiting Agca into the military on account of his lengthy jail time.

"Agca is exempt from military service," Demirbag said, recalling a legal provision which scraps military service for those who have served more than five-and-a-half years in jail.

"Agca is now a free ordinary person like everybody else," he said. *AFP*



AN ATLAS V rocket sits on the pad after high winds forced Nasa to scrub the launch of the unmanned New Horizons spacecraft on a mission to the planet Pluto, at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Tuesday Jan. 17. ***(See story on Page A11)*** AP

Tokyo scandal drags down Asian stocks

TOKYO—A SCANDAL AT ONE OF Japan's top Internet firms reverberated across Asia Wednesday, dragging down stock markets after the region's biggest bourse in Tokyo was forced to call an early close.

The Tokyo Stock Exchange took the unprecedented step of shutting down 20 minutes ahead of schedule to hold off a stampede of investors selling off the market and threatening to crash the system.

The region was battered by the escalating woes of Japan's Livedoor, once seen as a symbol of youth in Asia's largest economy but now beset by allegations of cooking the books and illegal insider trading.

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei-225 benchmark index nosedived 464.77 points or 2.94 percent at 15,341.18 points by the early close but at one point had sunk as far as 4.7 percent into the red before recovering.

Major stocks markets were down across Asia with the sole exception of Shanghai, which picked up 1.98 percent on fresh fund inflows into China.

"All Asian markets are down right across the board including Japan," said Stephen Wright, head of advisory at ASB Securities in New Zealand, adding that shares in Wellington did comparatively well by dropping only 0.59 percent.

The turmoil spilled over to early trade in Europe, where stock markets were largely down.

Adding to the gloom was a downturn overnight on Wall Street, which skidded on an oil price hike and weaker-than-expected results at US semiconductor giant Intel.

"Today is a very bad day for regional stock markets, mainly due to Tokyo's massive fall," said Sukbir Khanijoh, an analyst at Trinity Securities in Bangkok, where share prices were off 1.91 percent.

The losses were the biggest in Taiwan and South Korea. Taipei share prices plummeted by 3.16 percent, with the Intel results and local political concerns also spoiling the mood. *AFP*

The Republic of the Philippines

Invites the Owners of

Each Series of Eligible Bonds*

to submit, in an auction for each series of Eligible Bonds, offers to exchange:

- **3-Year Eligible Bonds of each series for 3-Year Philippine peso-denominated Bonds due 2009 (the "3-Year Benchmark Bonds")**
- **5-Year Eligible Bonds of each series for 5-Year Philippine peso-denominated Bonds due 2011 (the "5-Year Benchmark Bonds")**
- **7-Year Eligible Bonds of each series for 7-Year Philippine peso-denominated Bonds due 2013 (the "7-Year Benchmark Bonds")**

The 3-Year Benchmark Bonds, the 5-Year Benchmark Bonds and the 7-Year Benchmark bonds are collectively referred to as the Benchmark Bonds.

THE INVITATION TO EXCHANGE 3-YEAR ELIGIBLE BONDS WILL EXPIRE AT 4:00 P.M. (MANILA TIME) ON FRIDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2006, UNLESS EXTENDED OR EARLIER TERMINATED.

THE INVITATION TO EXCHANGE 5-YEAR AND 7-YEAR ELIGIBLE BONDS WILL EXPIRE AT 4:00 P.M. (MANILA TIME) ON FRIDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2006, UNLESS EXTENDED OR EARLIER TERMINATED.

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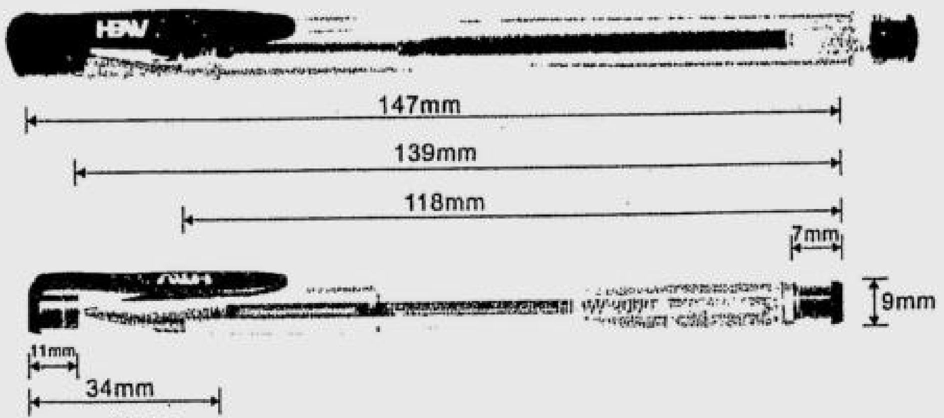

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4 terrorists killed in US air strike in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN—PAKISTANI PROVINcial authorities said four or five foreign terrorists were killed in last week's US missile strike that has strained relations with this Muslim nation, a key ally in US President George W. Bush's war on terror.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, on the eve of a trip Wednesday to Washington, said that despite the importance of ties with the United States, attacks inside Pakistan "cannot be condoned."

"Pakistan has committed to fighting terrorism but naturally we cannot accept any action within our country which results in what happened over the weekend," Aziz said, referring to the missile strike Friday in the border village of Damadola. Eighteen local people, including women and children, were also killed.

Pakistani intelligence officials have said the target of the attack was al-Qaida No. 2 Ayman al-Zawahri, who was invited to a dinner celebrating an Islamic holiday in the village but sent some aides instead.

US counterterrorism officials, however, haven't ruled out that Osama bin Laden's chief lieutenant was killed in the attack.

In the first official confirmation by Pakistani authorities that militants were killed, the administration of Pakistan's semiautonomous tribal regions bordering Afghanistan said in a statement Tuesday that the four or five bodies of "foreign terrorists," who were among 10 to 12 extremists attending the dinner, were taken away "by their companions." It did not identify the dead militants.

The statement, citing the chief official in the Bajur region where the Damadola is located, said its findings were from a report compiled by a "joint investigation team" but gave no specifics on who was included in the team. *AP*

Major powers nix Iran call for nuclear talks

TEHRAN—MAJOR POWERS DISMISSED Iran's call for the European Union to resume talks on Tehran's nuclear standoff with the West on Tuesday.

With European and US officials scornful of the offer and determined to report Iran to the UN Security Council, Russia said Tehran must halt the atomic fuel research it resumed last week in defiance of world powers if it wanted negotiations.

"Talk is cheap," US Department of State spokesperson Sean McCormack told reporters. "What they're engaged in is stirring up a lot of chaff. They've started up their diplomatic fog machine here."

A senior British official labeled as "vacuous" the Iranian offer in a letter from Javad Vaeedi, deputy head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, to restart talks aimed at allaying fears Tehran is pursuing development of an atomic bomb.

Russia, which has taken a tougher stance against Iran in recent weeks despite strong commercial and diplomatic ties, told Tehran to restore the basis for negotiations by reversing last week's move.

"Talks presuppose an obligation. The Iranian obligation was to stick to the moratorium," Lavrov said. "Now Iran (has departed from) the moratorium on scientific research."

Britain, France and Germany called off the talks after Tehran removed UN seals on uranium enrichment equipment, deepening Western suspicions that it is seeking nuclear arms.

Iran insists it seeks only a peaceful energy program.

Washington and its EU allies say it is time the UN nuclear watchdog agency sent Iran's case to the UN Security Council, which could eventually decide to impose sanctions on Iran.

China has demurred, saying it would like talks between Iran and the EU trio to resume, but has not said it will try to block any move to report Iran to the Council.

"Efforts through diplomatic channels need to be given another chance, China's Ambassador to the United States Zhou Wenzhong said.

Russia, while sharing China's opposition to UN sanctions on Iran, has moved closer to the West's view on referral.

And Washington predicted that a Feb. 2 meeting of the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, agreed on by the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China would report Iran to the Security Council. *Reuters*

MATING SEASON
Five-year-old Chuang Chuang (right) and 4-year-old Lin Hui giant pandas mate for the first time at Chiang Mai zoo, northern Thailand, Jan. 17.
AFP

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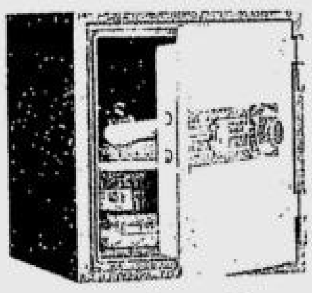
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Nasa Pluto probe launch postponed

WASHINGTON—NASA POSTPONED Tuesday the launch of the world's first probe to the icy, never-explored planet of Pluto after excessively strong winds put the liftoff at risk.

Engineers at the US space agency struggled with gusty winds throughout the two-hour launch window at Cape Canaveral, Florida, before they finally aborted Tuesday's planned liftoff for the massive Atlas V rocket.

They scheduled a new launch for Wednesday, setting a two-hour window from 1:16 p.m. for the ambitious mission to the outer reaches of the solar system.

"The ground winds exceeded our limits," said a spokesperson for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa). "The ground winds were a little too stiff for us."

The New Horizons mission endeavors to propel a grand-piano-sized spacecraft, packed with scientific instruments to Pluto, the outermost of the nine official planets of the solar system.

Flying at unparalleled speeds of up to 75,000 km per hour, it will take the craft 10 years to reach Pluto.

The craft will explore Pluto and its large moon Charon and, continuing on a trajectory away from the sun, will then spend five more years probing the icy and rocky bodies of the Kuiper Belt.

Scientists hope the ambitious journey will deliver new views and insights into our solar system, allowing them to better understand the origins of Earth and the other planets some 4.5 billion years ago. *AFP*

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WORLDBRIEFS

Sharon's breathing tube replaced

JERUSALEM—Doctors treating Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon successfully changed a respiratory tube Wednesday which had been inserted during his recent tracheotomy, after it developed a technical problem. "The breathing tube was changed overnight due to a technical problem," said a statement from Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital. "The successful procedure was conducted in the operating room. The prime minister was taken back to his room in the morning." The hospital said that Sharon, who was admitted to Hadassah two weeks ago after suffering a massive stroke, remained in a serious but stable condition. Sharon has been in a medically induced coma since his admittance to the hospital, with his deputy Ehud Olmert taking over as acting prime minister. He underwent the tracheotomy in a bid to help revive him from the coma on Sunday night. *AFP*

Deadliest Afghan suicide bombing probed

KABUL—Afghanistan's president has ordered an investigation into a bombing that killed 21 civilians at a wrestling match—the deadliest suicide attack since US-led forces ousted the Taliban in 2001. President Hamid Karzai ordered the inquiry Tuesday to focus on "where the militants are getting their resources, their support and where they are coming from," spokesperson Khaleeq Ahmed said. Hours before Monday's explosion in a town on the Afghan-Pakistan border, Karzai told reporters he believed most of those responsible for about 20 suicide attacks in the past three months have been foreigners, though he did not say from where. Afghan officials repeatedly claim that the Taliban and other militant groups have training bases in Pakistan and are receiving support from there—an accusation Islamabad denies. *AP*

Kidnappers threaten to kill US journalist in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Arabic television Al-Jazeera said Tuesday the kidnappers of a US woman journalist snatched in Baghdad had threatened to kill her if female prisoners in Iraq were not freed within 72 hours by US forces. The station broadcast a brief videotape of Jill Carroll, 28, a freelance reporter working for the Christian Science Monitor who was seized at gunpoint in a dangerous area of Baghdad 10 days ago. Carroll, wearing a grey sweatshirt with her long brown hair loose, was shown alone in the video and speaking but there was no sound. It was the first time she has been shown since her disappearance on Jan. 7. Journalists at the Qatar-based station said the kidnappers identified themselves as members of a previously unknown armed group calling itself the "Brigades of Vengeance" and threatened to kill her. "The kidnappers have set the US government a deadline of 72 hours to free Iraqi women prisoners," it said. Carroll's interpreter was shot dead and his body abandoned by the kidnappers during the abduction, while her driver got away. *AFP*

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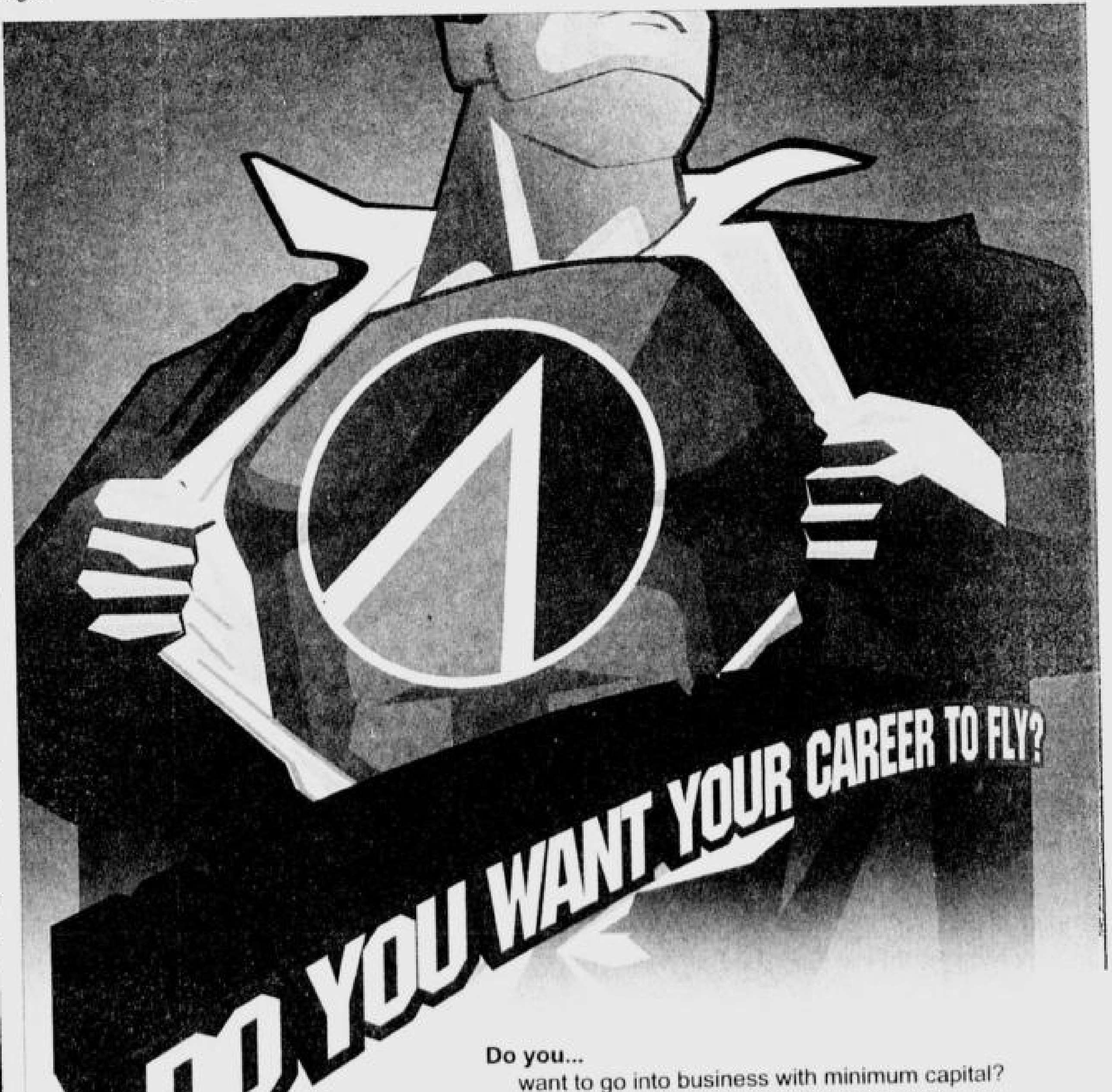
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OPINION

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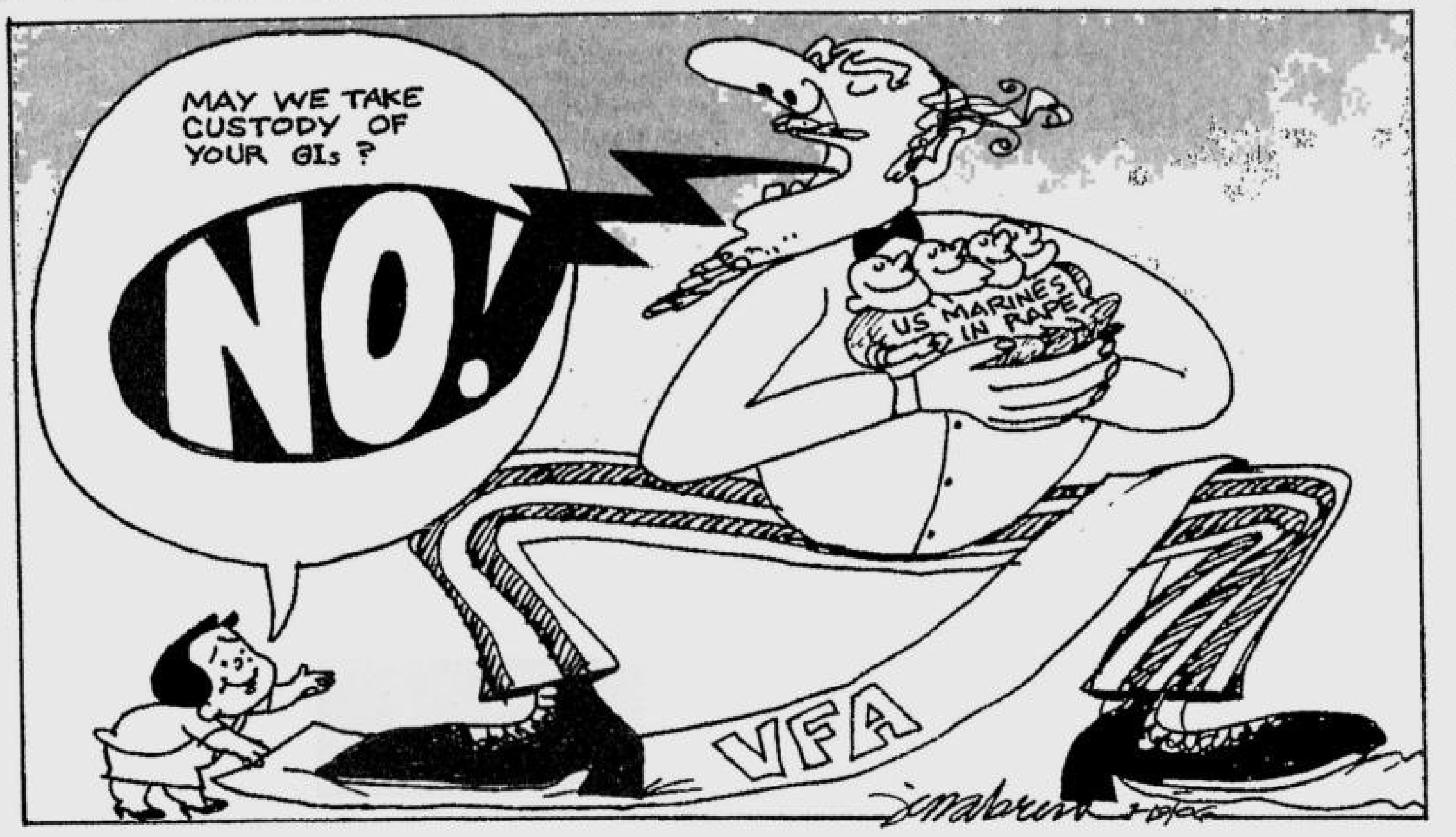
MAY WE TAKE CUSTODY OF YOUR GIs ?
NO!
US MARINES IN RAPE
VFA

Just noted?

Editorial

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TOOK it's own sweet time before responding to the Philippine government's request to be given custody of four US Marines accused of raping a Filipina in the Subic Bay Freeport last November. And it probably would have taken even longer had the Regional Trial Court of Olongapo not issued a warrant for their arrest last week. But the answer would still have been the same: a strong, unequivocal no.

In a note verbale dated Jan. 16, 2006, or exactly two months after the Philippine request was filed, the US Embassy told the Philippine government that "the US government shall continue to exercise custody until completion of all judicial proceedings." The embassy said the decision was based on Art. 5, Sec. 6 of the 1998 Visiting Forces Agreement, which says that custody of US personnel accused of violating Philippine laws "shall immediately reside with United States military authorities, if they so request, from the commission of the crime until completion of all judicial proceedings."

That request was apparently made—and immediately granted—during a phone call made by a US Embassy official to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez one day after the alleged rape occurred. A few days later, however, the Arroyo administration reversed its position, with the Department of Foreign Affairs formally asking the US government to turn over the accused Marines. The DFA cited Art. 5, Sec. 10 of the VFA which states that "confinement or detention by Philippine authorities of US military personnel shall be carried out in facilities agreed on by appropriate Philippine and US authorities" and said it was looking forward to holding discussions with US Embassy officials regarding the matter.

No one knows whether any such discussions were actually held. All the public learned was that embassy officials had allowed Foreign Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes, executive director of the Presidential Commission on the VFA, to have a peep at the accused and that he came away satisfied that they were not free to roam around Manila's Baywalk or sample the delights of Ermita's red-light district. But when finally the embassy rejected the request for custody, it claimed that it had "taken full account of the position of the government regarding custody."

That sounded very much like then Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez dismissing with a curt "Noted" every motion made by opposition lawmakers against the inclusion of questionable returns during the canvassing of votes for president and vice president in the 2004 elections. And as with Gonzalez, the Americans think that it puts the issue to rest.

It does not. The response to the Philippine request can hardly be deemed satisfactory. Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo earlier said the Philippines would insist on having "actual physical custody" of the accused Marines since this was an "extraordinary case." Rape is classified as a heinous crime under Philippine laws and if this case doesn't fall under the category of "extraordinary cases" mentioned in the VFA, maybe US officials should define what to them is "extraordinary."

The question now is whether the Arroyo administration will hold on to this position and pursue it until the Americans agree to give up the four Marines. Their insistence on keeping custody of the accused Marines has revived old resentments over the many times US officials blocked the efforts of Filipino victims to find justice by spiriting away accused American servicemen. Given that record, no one feels reassured by US avowals that it "remains committed to seeing that justice is served, and looks forward to a fair and impartial process that can provide a just outcome."

If the American officials insist on interpreting agreements only in a way that favors their own citizens, if they have sent away soldiers accused of murder and other serious crimes in the past, what is to prevent them from declaring a miscarriage of justice in this case, no matter how fairly the trial is conducted? And what is to keep them from sending the accused safely home? Like the US bases of old, the VFA is starting to look like an albatross to many Filipinos. If the Senate in 1991 could summon the will to terminate the lease on the bases, it shouldn't find it too hard to abrogate the VFA now that it is again being used to shield American soldiers accused of violating a Filipina.

Hara-kiri or Russian roulette?

Viewpoint

Juan L. Mercado

IN IT'S STAMPEDE TO OVERHAUL THE CONStitution, by clamping on a parliamentary form of government, the House of Representatives offered the Senate little beyond Russian roulette or Japanese hara-kiri.

Scholars, like Ateneo's Joaquin Bernas, S.J., have lucidly explained why the House can't overhaul the Constitution, if the Senate sits on its hands. A bicameral system means exactly that, Father Bernas notes: two houses, voting separately, must approve or reject a proposed change, by a vote of three-fourths of their members.

It takes two to tango. Wallflowers, like former President Fidel Ramos, skid into the dance floor through proxies. One of the administration's more sober members, former Sen. Heherson Alvarez, has warned: "The Supreme Court will eventually side with the Senate…and this move will be lost."

Under the unicameral formula, peddled by the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats party, the Senate must self-destruct, by the "middle of this year." As George Bernard Shaw put it so well: "Self-sacrifice enables us to sacrifice other people without blushing."

At the Lakas meeting, Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salapuddin, Majority Leader Prospero Nograles and Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. proposed that "[t]he President meet with Lakas senators for a meeting of minds." So, the party led by its chair, President Macapagal-Arroyo, would "negotiate" with senators starting next week. Negotiate what?

In 1603, the Shogun Ieyasu Tokugawa forbade the ritual *seppuku*. Before that, assistants (*kaishaku*) would help in the suicide. Will Ramos and Jose de Venecia "*kaishaku*" the Senate? Or would they just cheer on Russian roulette, chortling: "Don't worry. It's not loaded"?

The hard-nosed Sen. Joker Arroyo characteristically stripped down the proposal to its ultimate terms: "The Con-cha troika of Ms Arroyo, former President Fidel V. Ramos and Speaker Jose de Venecia mistakenly believes that the senators would agree to write their own obituary."

As the President & Company will find, this obit may take forever to write. "Against self-slaughter / There is a prohibition so divine / That cravens my weak hand," Imogen says in Shakespeare's "Cymbeline." Ms Arroyo has not given these 24 women and men any cogent reason for suicide. And who, in this country, would lay down his life for Gloria, Fidel, Joe—or Erap?

The Supreme Court, however, won't be rushed by timelines set by politicians when—not if—this case reaches the high tribunal, Father Bernas warns even this early.

Neither will the Senate. The senators will not be bound by a House resolution seeking to convene Congress into a Constituent Assembly, Senator Arroyo stressed. Although the administration seeks to head off a collision with the Senate by gathering 5 million signatures, protracted debates lie ahead: first in committee and then on the floor.

And why not? Is the basic law not as important as those protracted, inutile hearings by Congress? "A constitution," it has been aptly said, "is nothing more than the written form of the moral consensus the people already have reached."

Sen. Richard Gordon, meanwhile, put his finger on what bugs many about the Arroyo-Ramos-De Venecia schedule: it assumes that the people agree to what Lakas wants. "You can't have an interim parliamentary government simply because you say it," Gordon said. "It entails constitutional change. But the people are not willing to accept it." Indeed, there's hard evidence his words echoed the public sentiment.

Pulse Asia's last survey showed that more than half (55 percent) of the Filipinos, give or take three percentage points, did not want the Constitution amended at this time, Inquirer's Solita Monsod reminded us in a column. Six out of 10 don't buy a parliamentary system. "That proportion has remained remarkably steady at least over the past two years."

Or has that opposition instead stiffened?

The Consultative Commission has lofted patently unacceptable ideas: from scrubbing the 2007 elections to gutting freedom-of-expression safeguards. These have sent tempers soaring.

De Venecia, for example, hastily dumped the "No-El" idea on the Commission saying: "They overwhelmingly voted for it." That's a fib. Winston Churchill would call that a "terminological inexactitude."

De Venecia knows that Chair Jose Abueva and 18 others voted down "No-El" as a no-brainer. But they were smothered by 22 votes for a proposal that won't fly—including the somersault vote of Commissioner Sergio Apostol.

What's equally disturbing is: Apostol has been hawking what UP law professor Raul Pangalangan rightly calls a bid to gut provisions on the liberty of expression. Apostol would wedge one seemingly harmless word—"responsible"—into the Bill of Rights shield on press freedom.

The clause was just "hortatory," in Apostol's own words. It was an appeal to media: behave yourselves. Verbal superfluity is tolerable in political rallies, Pangalangan warns. But when tacked on to a Bill of Rights, verbosity can wreak havoc. "Settled rules of constitutional exegesis" affirm that every word, every clause must be given effect.

"There are absolutes in the Bill of Rights," Justice Hugo Black pointed out. "They were put there on purpose by men who knew what words meant and meant their prohibitions were absolute."

Such revisions may suit people who share Apostol's propensities to clamp on "responsibility" by constitutional fiat. But it does violence to the liberty of the press.

The No-El provision, this proposed sellout of free expression, will trigger an inevitable firestorm. And the first victim will be the Arroyo-Ramos-De Venecia timetable—and their meshed agendas.

***

E-mail : juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Good night and good luck

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

YOU GOTTA LOVE THIS GUY. GEORGE Clooney has gone worlds past his humble movie origins and blazed paths not unlike Clint Eastwood. "Good Night and Good Luck," which he did late last year, is getting a lot of Oscar buzz for himself as best director and David Strathairn as best actor. But whether or not it does well in the American awards (it didn't do so well commercially, though done at shoestring budget with ensemble acting as virtually its only cost, it has made a tidy profit for its makers), it is going to go very far where it matters: in the hearts and minds of the public.

Clooney has already received the Freedom Award at the 11th Critics Choice Award given by the Broadcast Film Critics Association (Jan. 9), apparently a good predictor of how the Oscars will go. I can only truly hope his movie gets a few more awards along the way to bring it to the attention of more people, and reap for its makers a few more financial rewards.

"Good Night and Good Luck" tells the story of Ed Murrow, the one person who raised the bar of ethics on journalism, especially of broadcast journalism. His was a resounding voice of decency and principle heard during the early days of TV, particularly during the darkest days of McCarthyism in the United States. The title of the movie comes from Murrow's famous line to end his commentaries, "Good night, and good luck." During the McCarthyist period in particular, the "good luck" took on the aspect of a deeply cherished wish. The American public needed it.

Clooney himself co-wrote the script. And he does his movie in black-and-white documentary-style, with a great deal of a "1950s feel" to it, though like Clint Eastwood he opts for a jazz score (Dianne Reeves is magnificent) rather than the bubble gum music of the time. The black-and-white hues and the fact that much of the drama takes place in the studio and boardrooms of CBS contribute to the claustrophobic air Clooney means to evoke about the McCarthyist era.

But more than that, from where I stand, it contributes mightily to an important point Clooney is making, which is that sometimes things are stark as black and white, good and evil, and journalism, rather than stepping aside and playing along in the name of objectivity, has to take sides. There are a couple of scenes where that point is expressly debated. Accused of editorializing, Murrow counters that he has searched his conscience and cannot find anything defensible in Joseph McCarthy's witch hunts, which he believed were wrecking the foundations of American democracy.

Murrow took McCarthy head on, McCarthy at one point accusing Murrow of being a communist. But the real struggle in this movie takes place, not between Murrow and McCarthy (who appears here as himself, from footage of Senate hearings and TV appearances), but between Murrow and his fellows: his editors, his colleagues, his conscience. I had thought Michael Mann did a fine job with this in "The Insider," which tells of the same problems the "60 Minutes" crew had with their bosses in CBS in trying to get the testimony of an expert against the tobacco giants aired, but Clooney does better. Never has a clash of ideas been more gripping. I thought the movie was too short—and it was an hour and a half.

Clearly, of course, the inspiration for this movie is more contemporary, and has to do with near-exact parallels between 1950s America and today. As in the 1950s, the United States is terrorized by someone with an equally fanatical mindset and an equally ruthless disposition, except that he has more power to harm the country—and has done so monumentally already—than McCarthy. He is not a senator, he is the president of the United States. In lieu of communists, he talks about terrorists, and hunts them down in all the phantasmagoric shapes that they take in his mind, with the same mindless zeal as McCarthy. As in the 1950s, the American public has been cowed into submission, driven by the fear that a less-than-patriotic, flag-waving, nuke 'em stance against the enemies of state, or what George W. Bush says they are, will transform them into the same enemies of state or their coddlers.

As in the 1950s, the media have been only too willing to play along, the network bosses being scared to lose sponsorships or become objects of witch hunts themselves. Some, like Fox News, are the equivalent of the 1950s media lapdogs that once hounded their liberal and progressive colleagues to despair and suicide. As in the 1950s, there are as well the Ed Murrows of today who will not yield to despotism but defend their legacy of freedom to the death. Indeed, as can be gleaned in the current turning of the tide in the United States, to triumph over madness.

There's just a note of biting irony here, one that turns "Good Night and Good Luck" in the end into a cautionary tale. After winning his titanic battles with McCarthy, with the corporate sponsors and bosses, and with an often hostile journalistic community, Murrow would lose the war anyway, felled by the cruel and despotic hand of commerce. He would be shoved aside to make way for "The $64,000 Question," which became the highest-rated show of the time. What can he say? his boss laments. "The public wants to be entertained." Well, T.S. Eliot suggested the world ends not with a bang but with a whimper.

But watch out for that magnificent speech of Murrow in the end where he makes a plea for turning TV—and we may take it these days, the whole of mass media, including movies—from an instrument merely to amuse, divert and insulate to one that illuminates and educates and inspires. There is a victory there amid its seeming quixotic resolve. But then Murrow has shown some fights can be won with spit, wit and grit.

Good night and good luck.

Elected officials should attend Council meet

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REforms and constitutional amendments began its hearings on Charter change this week, but some senators have vowed that they would "take their own sweet time about it." This is deemed by concerned citizens as a show of insensitivity; after all, the whole country is talking about the issue. *Parang wala silang pakialam*. And why? Because one of the constitutional amendments being pushed by the House of Representatives—the shift to a unicameral legislature—would write the Senate's "obituary."

But the more the senators stonewall, the more the people see the wisdom of having only one legislative chamber—it would be far less expensive, and it would be faster to react to people's needs. In the 1986 Constitutional Commission, the unicameral issue lost by only one vote. Heaven knows how progressive we would already be if only one chamber had been in place in the past 20 years.

* * *

Former President Aquino is not attending the Council of State meeting on Jan. 24 because she said she's afraid people would get confused about her presence there, considering that she had called for President Arroyo's resignation. It's a very short-sighted view, but she has every right to refuse since she is now a private citizen. But this is not the case with elected officials who occupy their posts as a result of their election by their peers, such as Senate President Franklin Drilon, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel and House Minority Leader Francis Escudero. They are not being invited to a tea party; with the positions they occupy, they are automatic members of this highest state advisory body and could very well contribute to solving the problems of the nation. Thus, they are duty-bound to attend the Jan. 24 meeting, however they feel about President Arroyo.

As I write this column, Drilon remains undecided on whether to go, but Pimentel and Escudero have declared they won't be used for mere "photo ops." Their thinking indicates the kind of politicians we have nowadays.

* * *

The local government officials' revival of the signature campaign to push Cha-cha is definitely caused by the obstinacy of the senators. I looked into this issue, which first surfaced in 1997. And I found some interesting facts.

Two cases were brought before the Supreme Court. One was by Jesus Delfin, whose group had earlier asked the Comelec to gather signatures of people who wanted to amend the 10-year old Constitution, under RA 6735 or the "People's Initiative Law" authored by the late Sen. Raul Roco. The Supreme Court, voting 8-6 on a ponencia written by Justice Hilario Davide, ruled that gathering signatures was not the Comelec's job; it also stated that RA 6735 was insufficient and incomplete and needed an implementing act. Two justices dissented: Justice Artemio Panganiban argued that there is "no such thing as an incomplete and insufficient law," while Justice Reynato Puno noted that while the law was poorly constructed, it was still not an incomplete or insufficient law. The signature proponents filed a motion for reconsideration; and during the voting, Justice Hermosisima switched from the majority to the minority side, to tie the vote at 7-7. This meant, however, that the motion was lost.

* * *

The Pirma people did not lose heart. They gathered over 5 million signatures and took them to the Comelec for verification, as the law required. But the poll body balked, citing the first decision. The Pirma people filed a petition for certiorari before the high court on the issue of whether the Comelec gravely abused its discretion in asserting that it could not verify the signatures because there was no enabling law. This time the justices were unanimous: the Court decision in the first case was final—there was no enabling law.

Curiously, almost 10 years later, Congress still hasn't passed this enabling law. Which is almost unpardonable considering that "people's initiative," a unique innovation in the 1987 Constitution, is intended to enshrine people power in a less destructive manner than taking to the streets. This brings me back to my original thesis: if only we have a one-chamber Congress, it will be a more dynamic and responsive one.

* * *

Holiday gift department: GMA sent out to officialdom and the media her gift of "The Philippine Coffee Collection 2005," featuring two tin canisters of ground RP coffee, grown in two of the major coffee regions here (Batangas and Cavite); as well as two coffee mugs bearing the presidential seal and decorated with coffee plantation scenes. According to an enclosed literature on the "Philippine Coffee Story," the RP blends, handpicked from plantations as far north as the Cordillera mountains all the way to the Batangas region in southern Luzon, celebrate the country's "unique geography and history." Located close to the equator, "the archipelago enjoys a mix of sunshine, rainfall and humidity seemingly calibrated to produce a number of distinct blends highly appreciated by coffee lovers all over the world." By the 1860s, *barako* coffee produced in Batangas was fetching five times the price of Java beans in world markets; while "In California, France and England, coffee from the Philippines was a quintessential luxury to be savored."

With the decline of global prices, however, coffee farming suffered. But in 2002, said the literature, GMA envisioned the revival of the industry and stirred it back to life through the National Coffee Development Board. She ordered the "ambitious rehabilitation" of 22,000 hectares of coffee plantations, so that by providing technical assistance and funding, the Coffee Board "is once again rallying growers, distributors and merchants to excel in the world market and win coffee accolades."

Dr. X

YOUNG BLOOD

Timek ti Amianan

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I WAS A CONSISTENT HONOR STUDENT IN ELEMENTARY and high school. I graduated with honors from a well-known university. Then I pursued graduate studies in the same university. But when I took a course under a terror of a professor, he gave me a grade of 5. And my life turned into a mess.

I was having a good time last summer after finishing all the course requirements for my master's. I was on course to finish my studies in three years, which was not bad at all since I knew some people who took five or even seven years to finish it. But two months after the current school year started, I received a notice saying I got 5 for that subject.

I was shocked the moment I saw my grade. I could not sleep well for many months. I felt devastated. I thought my career was over. My students had to bear with a grumpy teacher. At the slightest provocation, I would scold them for having bad attitudes and poor work. They did not know what was happening to me.

I was in a dilemma. I was asking myself where I would be going from here. One professor told me straight that I should change my career.

It was a stupid advice, I said to myself, because he didn't even know the circumstances. I resolved never to seek his opinion again.

Was I a delinquent student? No. Was I incompetent and dim-witted? Of course, not. With these questions swirling in my mind, I tried to recall the events that led to this baffling situation. Why did my professor give me such an undeserved mark? What were his motives?

Dr. X is known for his unreasonable impositions on undergraduate students attending his class. For one thing, a student must not yawn inside the classroom or he will be told to get out. School rules provide that students who incur seven absences should drop the course or get a failing grade, but Dr. X sets the limit at three absences. And then students who want to drop the course on the last day will not find him in his room.

When I first took a course he was handling, I was already doing graduate studies. Once I yawned in our class of five people, but he ignored it. He must have a different rule for his graduate students. At the end of the semester, I did not only pass the course, but I got a grade of 1.

During the summer session, I took another course he was handling, and I soon sensed that his attitude toward me had changed. I could not say exactly why. I consulted him about my thesis proposal and he treated me with evident condescension. I suspect that his attitude began to change after I voiced out a critical opinion and made suggestions on how to improve a paper a classmate had written and presented in class. When it was my turn to present my paper (which was actually the undergraduate thesis five classmates and I had prepared), I was also grilled but managed to respond to their questions.

If this was what made him change his attitude toward me (and I can think of no other reason), then he is saying students should keep their mouths shut. And if that's the case, then I would rather have the 5 than become uncritical of whatever is said in class. Then also, I have reason to detest the kind of teacher he is and I regret taking his course.

At the end of our summer class, I submitted the required paper. I was an hour late and asked him for some consideration. After I came back from the province to help with the registration of students the following semester, I learned that he had not listened to my appeal. Instead, he had given me a grade of "Incomplete." That means a student lacked certain requirements to pass the course and he has one year to complete such requirement, which in my case was the paper.

When I asked Dr. X why he gave me that grade, he said it was because I was late in submitting the paper. I asked him if there was anything wrong with it. His reply was that I should put it in a folder together with a title page. Two months after complying with his instructions, I learned that I had flunked the course.

If it was because of the paper, which I did my best to write, he could have advised me to revise it since I had a year to do so under the rules of the university.

Almost one year after the incident, I still have no idea what prompted him to act so unfairly against me. Aside from flunking the course, I was also eased out of the department when the committee of which he was a member decided not to renew my contract to teach.

Obviously, he won that round, but I don't think I was a loser since I learned my lesson well. That experience did not—and will not—deter me from pursuing a teaching career.

I learned a lot from Dr. X. For one thing, I learned that I should not imitate his ways, and especially that I should be considerate to my students with regard to academic matters. I learned that in preparing a syllabus, I should present clearly the requirements of the course and specify what weight would be given to each of them. I also learned that to be a good teacher, you should be a good mentor to my students and have their best interests in mind. Lastly, after surviving this personal crisis, I learned that the most important thing we should value in life is our relationship with others, which should not be founded on material considerations but on the knowledge that ultimately we will account for our actions to our God.

The simple truth is that I am 23, I am young and I will conquer the world.

Timek ti Amianan, 23, teaches at a reputable university based in Quezon City.

Santo Niños, rapture and tragedy

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

ANOTHER RELIGION-RELATED TRAGEDY HAS claimed the lives of at least 20, the majority of them innocents who, when they set off, had no idea that their foolhardy elders were taking them to watery graves.

Last Sunday, during the feast of the Holy Infant Jesus or the Santo Niño, a boat overloaded with devotees and their children capsized in the waters off San Ricardo town on Panaon Island in Southern Leyte. The boat named ML Jun Jay was part of a fluvial procession, a festive display that often highlights religious feasts in places that are near bodies of water.

Overcrowded boats, uncaring public officials, unmindful church officials, fevered rapture and carefree abandon on the part of devotees—all these are the ingredients of impending disaster. It had happened several times before, it happened again during one of the Filipinos' beloved of feasts. And most of the victims were children—like the Santo Niño.

But if ill-managed fluvial processions are the recipe for tragedies, they also say a lot about the Filipinos' penchant for public display of religious fervor that borders on fanaticism and recklessness. No one can say what spiritual merits or demerits can come from all these. I leave that to God to decide.

It is hard to fathom the motives, the reasons and the urgency that push people to participate in these life-threatening faith-related activities, such as: getting crucified while roasting in the deadly summer heat; risking being trampled on during the feast of the Black Nazarene; or squeezing into overloaded boats. Two people died during the Black Nazarene "surge" (human tsunami is more like it) last week. That is not seen anywhere in the world.

Some do it as *panata* (a vow) because of prayers that have been granted, others do it to buttress pending petitions, and there are those who simply feel good being there with the hope grace would rain down on them.

With the exception of the messy crucifixion, the other religious-cultural festivities aren't supposed to be life threatening if only these are properly organized and controlled. But we never learn.

In 1993, a total of 269 people perished in the murky river in Bocaue, Bulacan when a pagoda-boat, packed with devotees, capsized. Similar tragedies happened in Lumban, Laguna; Butuan City and Pampanga in the past decade. These are all so relatively recent that, after a few clicks of the computer keys by the INQUIRER research staff, the news stories on these tragedies quickly tumbled out.

And was it at the Peñafrancia feast that a makeshift structure, from where people watched the fluvial procession, collapsed?

Grim and determined Bible-thumping purists will easily dismiss all this Pinoy frenzy as plain idolatry. As a Christian and Catholic, I have never felt inclined to make such practices part of my spiritual itinerary. But as a Filipino, ah, I love watching this faith-filled cultural display. Who am I to judge the state of the soul of those who practice this type of popular religiosity?

Beholding the faith and fervor of the *masa* could be a confounding experience. And it would be good for those who seem to have had their faith all theologically and biblically figured out to come down from their perch. There is a lot to learn from hobnobbing with the *hoi polloi*, for whom spiritual ecstasy might comes easy with only the Marian hymns in Baclaran on Wednesdays. Or in being lost in the heady mist of incense in Quiapo church, and knowing in their heart of hearts that God listens and has mercy.

Still it wouldn't hurt if the Church hierarchy would do something to rein in the excess fervor, even for the simple reason that God does not want to see the multitude falling all over themselves and to their deaths. But that is the Pinoy, one might argue, and this trait is perhaps what keeps many from choosing death by suicide.

This affection for the Santo Niño, academics would say, is reflective of the Filipino's amazing childlike faith that also often borders on the childish. How do you explain the transmogrification of the image of the Infant Jesus of Prague into a *niño* with multiple personalities?

If the parish you went to last Sunday was one attended by people from all walks of life, you would have seen Santo Niños also from all walks of life and dressed according to their owners' taste, inclination and predilection. The Santo Niño has now become a doll to be fancily dressed up like a Barbie or an infant transvestite. But macho Santo Niños in police uniform are now also fairly common.

At Mass last Sunday, I saw a Santo Niño in denim overalls carried by a young woman who was wearing the shortest denim shorts. (Only in Catholic churches. You don't see this kind of Sunday wear in the Iglesia ni Cristo.) Well, in order not to be discomfited and discombobulated by the surreal-ness of it all, I chose to be amused.

Elsewhere that day, while "*Pit Señor!*" exploded in Cebu and the *Ati-atihan* thundered with "*Hala bira!*" in Kalibo, *niños* and *niñas* drowned in Southern Leyte.

It's real and it's surreal. As the great Nick Joaquin wrote: "So how much more manifold do you want the Philippines to be? From orgasmic Kalibo to tranquil Boracay. Or from the hot mystic lowlands of Pangasinan to the cold mystic highlands of Baguio. From the mega that is Manila to the mini that is a Ma'i village. Within this archipelago, you commute between the 20th century and the prehistoric, between 13th century gothic and baroque, between the Islamic and the Hispanic, between the East and West, here met and mated.

"*Hala bira!* Which means: Sock it to me!"

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Behind our Constitutions, past and present (2)

(Continued from Monday)

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE DECISION TO DRAFT A NEW CHARTER (and thus close off the option of restoring the 1935 Charter) was not, early on, an absolute objective of the opposition. In 1980, the National Covenant of Freedom merely called for the elimination of authoritarian constitutional provisions and laws. This attitude was also reflected in the January 1980 platform of Unido. When, after Ninoy Aquino's murder, attempts to unify the opposition gained impetus, a consistent call for a new, progressive Charter began.

A result of these efforts was the Declaration of Unity, a joint manifesto issued by opposition leaders and the Convenor's Group in 1984. Point 5 of the manifesto, calling for "free, orderly and honest elections," listed that, "as a minimum," every effort would be made to formulate and ratify a new Charter "within eighteen months after the new leadership shall have assumed office."

The manifesto listed particular provisions that would be desirable, including establishing local political units and institutions that would bring government and the making of decisions closer to the people; representation, by direct vote, for all sectors and classes; an executive elected for a definite term and by direct vote of the people; an independent judiciary; checks and balances and public accountability; the supremacy of civilian authority over the military; an effective system for recalling officials; and limitations on martial law.

It is clear from the point of view of those groups that a return to the status quo ante was undesirable. The goal was not the mere restoration of the pre-martial law order, since everyone admitted that it was unsatisfactory. The restoration to the Filipino people of the full measure of their curtailed rights and freedoms was the essential goal.

Positive developments that harked back to the tumultuous 1960s and early 1970s had to be nurtured, too. The commitment to the 1984 platform was reaffirmed in January 1985, when the Convenors' Group and the National Unification Council agreed to a common set of criteria in selecting the opposition's presidential candidate.

On March 9, 1985, the Convenors' Group—composed of Corazon Aquino, Jaime Ongpin and Lorenzo Tañada, among others—sent a message, accepting an invitation to attend the Unification Conference, which would attempt to further unify the opposition. The next paragraph, lifted from that letter, made clear the reason why a new Charter was felt to be necessary.

"Fourth. There are new forces in Philippine politics—the mass-based and sectoral groups and concerned citizens who hitherto have not been involved in partisan politics but are now giving unselfishly of themselves in the struggle for the freedom of the people. They have contributed much in putting pressure on the repressive Marcos regime. No one could have foreseen the great awakening of our people after Ninoy's death. It is an awakening that must find fulfillment. Thus, in the process of unification, these new forces must be given a significant and meaningful role. Our people want something new in our politics. This is the new dimension our people are looking for. Without these new forces, meaningful unity cannot be achieved."

Support for this view, and acceptance and commitment to the "declaration of government" and the Minimum Program of Government were again stressed in a coalition agreement reached in November 1985, on the eve of the snap elections.

Then Edsa took place. Already pondering on constitutional niceties (as David Wurfel put it. "A nation of lawyers paid early attention to constitutional legitimacy"), the oath of office that Cory Aquino took made no mention of her mandate being a constitutional one. Instead of referring to the Marcos Constitution, she made it explicit that "on the basis of the people's mandate clearly manifested last February 7, (we) are taking power in the name and by the will of the Filipino people . . ."

But the question of which—or what—Constitution the new government would either restore or promulgate remained to be answered. Although, according to Prof. Francisco Nemenzo, "in her oath of office President Aquino herself pledged to a revolutionary government," the new administration really had three options to choose from: a return to the 1935 Charter, continuing with and reforming the 1973 Charter, or, as the opposition had called for during the dictatorship, creating a new Constitution.

The first and third options were not incompatible with the way she had taken power, while the second option would provide for continuity in the presidential "succession" that had occurred. The socialist-oriented analysis written by Nemenzo, "From Autocracy to Elite Democracy," and that of Wurfel in his book "Filipino Politics: Development and Decay" help illuminate how (as Nemenzo put it), "heading off the first government crisis, the president resolved the issue with supreme dexterity." *(To be continued)*

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph/blog

THEY SAID

Time for the young

"This is a country of 85 million Filipinos. It is time for the young to pick up the mantle of responsibility from the elders."

—Former President Fidel V. Ramos

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Callous and blind to poverty

WE FIND THE STATEMENT OF National Economic Development Authority Director General Augusto Santos—that the Arroyo administration is having a hard time finding "the poorest of the poor," especially in Metro Manila—arrogant and ridiculous. In local parlance, Santos has unmasked his being "*matapobre*."

Fighting or eradicating poverty must start not just by acknowledging its existence; it is also important to identify its causes and extent so as to apply the correct approach to confront and solve it.

But how can the government sincerely lick poverty when Santos haughtily says that Filipinos are exaggerating their plight by declaring themselves hungry and poor because they want more money to spend or more food to eat? When a child dies of dengue because her mother cannot produce P100, I dare Santos to call it an exaggeration.

More deplorable than Santos' utter contempt for the poor's plight is the lifestyle of our government officials. The comfort of their posh houses and expensive SUVs have made them so callous and blind to the realities of poverty. Santos need not look far. If he would only step outside Malacañang and take a quick walk around the urban poor communities along San Miguel, Manila, he'd realize that his not being able to see the poor makes him idiotic.

Are there many of his kind in the government who are so shameless to accuse Filipinos of merely inventing the poverty and misery they are experiencing? Are they so blind to pinpoint communities of poor Filipinos who exist everywhere due to lack of livelihood and opportunities?

The poor are mobile indeed, not because they want to be but because they are constantly being evicted from their shanties. The NorthRail Project alone has resulted in violent demolitions that left thousands of families homeless.

Finding the "poorest of the poor" who deserve to benefit from the P35-billion dole-out program of the government is problematic in the first place. Why be selective in addressing poverty issues when more than 80 percent of the 85 million Filipinos are dirt poor? The government's anti-poverty measures are short-sighted and ineffective. They even worsen the situation by always failing to address the root of the miseries of our lowly *kababayans*.

We reiterate our challenge to Santos—we are ready to give him a free tour of communities where almost all Filipinos are hungry and poor. And by this, we mean in the Philippines.

—PRESTOLINE S. SUYAT,
spokesperson,
Kilusang Mayo Uno,
63 Narra St., Barangay Claro,
Project 3, Quezon City

Promoting tourism—Davao's way

"ROUND THEM UP AND PUT them elsewhere, away from public sight." This is the swift solution that authorities adopted to get rid of vagrants and street children in Davao City. The solution was justified under this reasoning: The vagrants and street children offer an unpleasant sight for Asean Tourism Forum (ATF) visitors; not only that, they could be used for "criminal" or even "terrorist" acts.

Already disadvantaged and neglected, the vagrants and street children of Davao City had to be publicly humiliated as "possible accessories to the criminals and terrorists" by public officials who are supposed to ensure that their constituents fully enjoy their constitutional "right to adequate housing, food and security."

Is this how Republic Act 8425 (Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act) should be implemented? Davao City's solution completely disregards, undermines and mocks RA 8425.

The local government allocated P20 million to host the ATF. Well, maybe, this budget includes expenses for hauling street children to the "appropriate" places. While the city may gain from hosting the ATF, it sends a strong message telling one and all that vagrants and street children "are unpleasant to see," so they should be isolated and their constitutional freedom of movement should be restricted for security reasons. This reasoning is a cause for public concern: it has come to pass that being poor and the consequences of this desperate condition may be used against a poor man to deprive and restrict his rights.

Those of you going to Davao for the ATF, better dress up and look good, lest you'd be rounded up as well. This is how tourism is promoted in Davao City.

—DANILO A. REYES,
Asian Human Rights Commission,
19/F Go-Up Commercial Building,
998 Canton Road, Kowloon,
Hong Kong SAR

'Getting off the bus' was right choice

READING CONRADO DE Quiros' "Stop the bus, I'm getting off" (PDI 1/12/06), my wife and I felt a mild thrill of vindication.

In 1983, we peered into the future and concluded that we ought to give our three children the education and the travel experience necessary to give them the option to, indeed, "get off the bus."

I wish things did not turn out the way they did for our country; but on hindsight, I'm delighted to say it was the smartest thing we ever did.

—ROLANDO S. VILLACORTA JR.,
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Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

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GMA had a lot to thank Barbers for

WERE SEN. ROBERT BARBERS present when the Senate voted on the controversial second envelope, President Estrada would not have been ousted and Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo would not have been sworn in as President. His absence was a minor twist that led to a much bigger event that changed the course of Philippine politics.

President Estrada was not impeached and could never have been even if the impeachment process had run its full course. The Edsa II People Power that ousted him was triggered by the senators' 11-10 vote denying the motion to have the second envelope opened. Fearful of its damaging effects, the 11 pro-Estrada senators voted against the opening. The opposition then, composed of 10 senators, lost by one vote.

That result rubbed on the people's sentiment. In disgust, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel tendered his irrevocable resignation as Senate president; the prosecutors, on the other hand, walked out in protest. There ensued mass outrage, prompting Jaime Cardinal Sin to call the people to march to Edsa and demand President Estrada's resignation. The rest is history.

And now, that minor twist. At that crucial 11-10 voting, Barbers was in the United States for a medical check-up. If he were here, being a principled and an independent-minded man, he could have aligned himself with the opposition. The voting would have resulted in a deadlock: 11-11.

As a matter of policy, whenever there is a deadlock, the presiding chair breaks it with his vote. By all indications, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., the presiding judge of that impeachment trial, would have voted for the opening of the second envelope in accord with the people's sentiment. The contents would have shown far less damaging documents, contrary to what the people were made to believe. The "smoking gun" could not have blown up on Estrada's face—for there would have been no smoking gun in the first place. And that would have changed public opinion in favor of President Estrada.

When she offered her condolences to the family of the deceased former senator, President Macapagal-Arroyo should also have expressed her sincere thanks to the senator for his absence in that crucial voting on the opening of Jose Velarde's second envelope.

—J.C. PUENTENEGRA,
Gullas Law School,
University of the Visayas,
Cebu City

Senate seen as hope vs greed

IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL turmoil, the Senate, under the leadership of Senate President Franklin Drilon, has emerged as a rampart against the clever manipulation of the electorate for the selfish and partisan interests of politicians. Most clever is the move to amend the Constitution primarily to suit the ambitions of President Macapagal-Arroyo and the devious motives of her sycophants in the House of Representatives and local government units.

Thus, the Arroyo administration has trained its guns on Drilon. It does not help that Drilon is also in the line of presidential succession.

To hold on to power—never mind that 80 percent of the people believe she cheated in the presidential polls—Ms Arroyo has resorted to bribing local officials and congressmen with the prospects of "no-election" in 2007 and three-year extension of their terms of office. It may be recalled that witnesses in a Senate hearing had earlier accused Ms Arroyo of complicity in the bribery of Comelec officials before the 2004 elections, right in her Quezon City residence.

The Senate has become a focal point in the opposition to greed and manipulation in high places of government, and Drilon has the courage to lead it. No wonder that in the Social Weather Stations survey in the middle of last year, he and the Senate obtained a positive rating, much higher than those garnered by Ms Arroyo herself, Speaker Jose de Venecia and retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., who all obtained negative ratings. Drilon must continue what he is doing for the sake of our people's liberties and welfare.

—LOUIE TOLEDO,
1344 Evangelista St.,
Bangkal, Makati City

ALONE, this coconut farmer remains unsure of his stake in the coco levy fund GENE BOYD LUMAWAG

PCGG: An indictment of our justice system

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION on Good Government's move to strike a "settlement or compromise" on the coco levy-related cases is not only inopportune but also most unfair to the 20 million or so coconut farmers, farmworkers and their dependents.

The farmers have already won a big portion of the coco-levy assets—the block of 27 percent San Miguel Corp. shares now worth P50 billion. Effectively used, interest earnings of that fund, estimated at P5 billion yearly, could already do a lot to help uplift the lives of the farmers. And this can be done without having to enter into a "compromise or settlement."

From the year 1973 through 1982, the levy was imposed to raise funds for investment in commercial and industrial coconut-related enterprises "for the benefit of the coconut farmers." The quoted phrase was reiterated at least 82 times in the presidential decrees (PDs) imposing the levy.

It did not, however, turn out that way. The bulk of the levy funds and assets somehow got into the hands of a few cronies of President Marcos.

When President Aquino took over the reins of government in 1987, the PCGG was able to sequester some ill-gotten wealth, including the bulk of the levy assets; suits were filed to determine their legitimate owners.

After one of the longest court battles in the history of our judicial system, the Supreme Court decided on Dec. 4, 2001 that the coconut levy is public funds "for the benefit of the coconut industry and its farmers." It directed the Sandiganbayan to finish all pending levy-related cases within six months from the date of that decision.

On May 7, 2004, the Sandiganbayan ruled that the 27 percent SMC shares together with 14 holding companies and the oil mills, belong to the government "in trust for all the coconut farmers." The Court also clearly stated that "It is high time that the real beneficiaries of the coconut levy funds, the coconut farmers who contributed to it and the entire coconut industry, be given a chance to reap the benefits that are due them."

Seeking the "immediate execution" (of that decision), the solicitor general filed on Aug. 8, 2005 a motion, noting that "the coconut levy funds could be the only hope to genuinely address the multifarious and complicated problems in the coconut industry and the longstanding hardship in the lives of the millions of coconut farmers. Truly, there is a need to take decisive steps to remedy social and economic inequities and quickly bring justice, life and dignity to every coconut farmer."

Under the circumstances, instead of seeking a "compromise or settlement" the PCGG should vigorously pursue justice for the coconut farmers, as did its previous chair, Haydee Yorac.

For as long as the coco-levy cases remain unresolved and the farmers are denied what is due them, for so long our justice system stands indicted.

—OSCAR F. SANTOS,
chair,
Coconut Industry Reform
Movement Inc.
84 Masikap St.,
Teachers' Village, Quezon City

In shared grief over Mecca tragedy, a cry for peace rises

WE, MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS in the Philippines, extend our condolences and deepest sympathies to the victims of the stampede in Mecca, Saudi Arabia last Jan. 12. The pilgrims died manifesting immense faith in Islam and Allah. This year's holy pilgrimage to Mecca is of great significance to many Muslim nations—Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, to name a few—caught up in war and injustice.

As the Muslim pilgrims prayed for bread and life, amity and justice, may this tragedy, more than anything else, serve as a spring of hope to all Muslims for as long as their strength and tenacity as one people continue to be tested. May this tragedy be a cry for peace amid the wars that continue to rage in Muslim nations, undermining their democracy and sovereignty.

May the prayers of the pilgrims in Mecca and of all the peace-loving people of the world, coupled with resolute struggle, put an end to the reign of war and plunder that now threaten every Muslim nation.

—REN JALLALUDIN ROPETA,
vice chair,
Moro-Christian Peoples Alliance
(MCPA), 48 A Mapagbigay St.,
Barangay Pinyahan,
Diliman, Quezon City

The secret of youth discovered

HIGH BLOOD

Tranquilino V. Quinto Jr.

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

LIFE IS GOD'S MOST PRECIOUS GIFT TO mankind and it is our responsibility to take care of it until He takes it back.

At 61, I have reached the twilight zone. But I intend to make this stage of my life the most exciting, pulsating, vibrant and pleasurable.

Visions of great and wonderful things I could have been or I could have accomplished are now water under the bridge. My dreams of becoming a military general or a ship captain have remained just that—dreams. They never really became an all-consuming passion. But I can still dream, can't I?

I find hope and encouragement—to go on despite my dire pecuniary situation—in God's word. I believe in God's promise in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you; plans to give you hope and a future." He uses people and circumstances to fulfill this promise. We only have to be sensitive to the occasion.

It gives me great pleasure to see old friends and renew the bonds of friendship. They say that the most comfortable and gratifying friendships are the "old shoes" kind, forged when we were children or in high school. They have a certain kind of purity in them.

One such friendship is the one I have with Rear Admiral Juan A. De Leon (ret.). The admiral is now deputy chief operating officer and vice president for operations of San Lazaro Leisure Park. He and I lost touch with each other after our high school graduation, but when we met again during our class reunion, we just picked up as though it were only yesterday. Time zones and geographical gaps melted away as we shook hands and bear-hugged each other. Despite our social, educational and financial disparity, the admiral was not at all stuffy and distant toward me—a poor, jobless senior citizen.

As I look around me day by day, I am troubled to see people ostensibly withering away when they should be enjoying the prime of their lives. So early the flame of their dreams and aspirations seems to be flickering off. Instead of stoking the embers that make it burn blazing and bright, they have left it to be extinguished by the destroyer of life: despair. Instead of getting up and moving on after a fall, they have chosen to stay down. And instead of learning from their mistakes, they have checked out.

They refuse to enjoy the thrills and benefits of delayed aging, without having to spend for drugs and cosmetics. With the economy going haywire, the more their lives have become a dull, bleak and dauntingly challenging existence. How pathetic!

I believe that as long as we aspire and strive and grow "to better our best"—knowing that our best is not good enough—we are not history. Of course, there will always be the temptation or the tendency to let up in our effort to sustain and feed our aspirations to the maximum level of joy. As we drift with the tide of aimlessness, our aspirations tend to decline and fade slowly. According to Adolphe Monod, "Between the great things that we cannot do and the small things that we don't do, the danger is that we shall do nothing."

I admire the great men in the Bible and their likes because they are worthy of emulation. There's Abraham who lived as a nomad for 175 years—a truly old man by today's yardstick. Yet his life was full of excitement, adventure, trials and joy to the very end. Then there's Moses who lived 125 years, early on as a prince of Egypt, then as a pauper tending his father-in-law's sheep; and finally, as a leader of the Israelite nation. With unfading vision and physical strength, he climbed Mount Moab alone to die before God. Caleb, at age 80, passionately and eagerly fulfilled his aspiration to possess the land God promised him.

We've heard about old men in China and elsewhere who lived to over a hundred years without the comforts of modern amenities. I believe the secret of their longevity lay in their finding peace and contentment in the most adverse of conditions and in the most unfavorable of circumstances.

The more I consider the lives of these great men, the more I am convinced that education, wealth and ability are not exactly the key to live up to a ripe old age. This brings to my mind the words of Orson Marden: "No one is old until the interest in life is gone out of him; until his spirit becomes aged, until his heart becomes cold and unresponsive. As long as he touches life he cannot grow old in spirit. A man is old, no matter what his years, when he is out of touch with youth, with its ideals, its point of view; out of touch with the spirit of his time, when he has ceased to be progressive and up-to-date."

Spurred by these words, I will endeavor to keep my mind young, abreast with the times and attuned with the spirit of God. I guess a most fatal mistake a senior citizen or even the youth can commit is to believe in the lie: "My dreams and aspirations matter little now. I'm not young anymore." How pathetic! I may be over the hill but I certainly am no dodo.

Tranquilino V. Quinto Jr., 61, is a retired NGO worker and former pastor of the ACGFI church. He is currently working with the pastor of The World Mission Community Church in Burol, Dasmariñas, Cavite.

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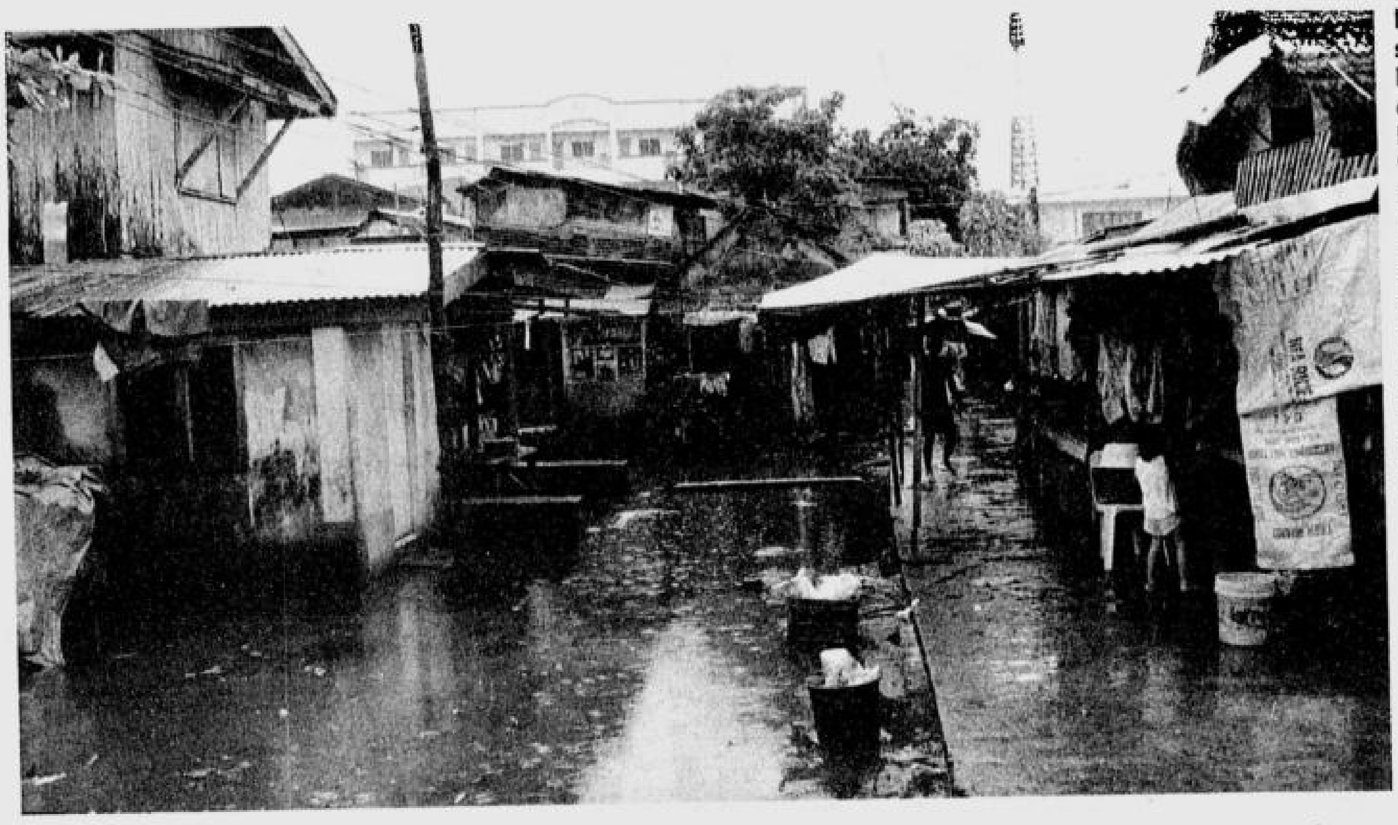
INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Settlers take final bend to PNR land ownership

By Gil Francis G. Arevalo
Legazpi City



INFORMAL settlers have occupied PNR "Looban" in Legazpi City for the past 50 years; (inset) the PNR station in the city. PHOTOS BY NIÑO JESUS Y. ORBETA

AFTER OVER 50 YEARS OF struggling to own land abandoned by the Philippine National Railways (PNR) in Legazpi City, thousands of families are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

The state-owned PNR has agreed to sell its property to the city government for a housing project that will benefit the Legazpi City Slumdwellers Federation Inc. (LCSFI), which is composed of 19 organizations of informal settlers in 17 barangays.

"We're thankful something like this happened as many families do not yet have security of tenure in the areas they occupy," said Jun de la Torre, who acted as the settlers' representative in the series of dialogues with PNR board directors.

The LCSFI considers the agreement a breakthrough in realizing the aims of Presidential Proclamation No. 40, which was signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo on May 7, 2001. The proclamation deems suitable for housing sites PNR land that has been occupied by settlers for the past 50 years.

Citing Section 8 of Republic Act No. 7279, the President said government-owned land left idle for many years are best sold and made into sites for socialized housing.

Proclamation No. 40 covers idle and abandoned PNR properties in Legazpi and in the towns of Camalig, Bacacay, Malilipot and Sto. Domingo, and in Tabaco City, all in Albay. The lands, comprising a total area of 46.6 hectares, are presently occupied by 4,700 families.

The city and the PNR agreed to make Lot 1728 of Barangay 33 (PNR Looban) the pilot area for a socialized housing project. The 1.2-ha lot is occupied by 200 families.

"For the last three decades, we have followed up PNR-Manila's intention to sell the land," De la Torre said.

Since the proclamation was issued, the settlers had to wait for four more years until the housing agreement was forged due to kinks in the technical plans sent by the LCSFI to the local government and the PNR.

The LCSFI said unscrupulous persons claiming ownership of the lands had surfaced and tried to pressure the occupants to leave, especially from the PNR areas in Tabaco, Bacacay and Sto. Domingo.

P7-million tab

The pilot housing site will cost about P7 million. The PNR and the city government have agreed to sell the subdivided lots to settlers at P550 per sqm, an amount they deem just and reasonable, considering the current demand for such property.

On June 6, 1994, the city's appraisal committee came up with a price valuation of Lot 1421-B in Purok 7 and Purok 8 of San Roque and pegged the figure at P120 per sqm. De la Torre said the city government promised to pay for the land and to immediately draw up procedures for its sale to the occupants.

Other areas being considered for socialized housing are in Barangay 33, Lot No. 1521 (605 sqm) and Lot No. 1517 (916 sqm); Barangay 32-San Roque, Lot No. 1421 (28,870 sqm), Lot No. 1124 (1,494 sqm) and Lot No. 513; Barangay 39-Bonot, (17,000 sqm); Barangay 42-Rawis (30,000 sqm); and Barangay 46-San Joaquin.

Engineer Jose Varquez of the PNR Real Estate Department, speaking in behalf of PNR General Manager Jose Ma. Sarasola II, expressed support for the LCSFI and the city, now that the pilot area for socialized housing had been determined.

"That's why we're also explaining to them all the technical aspects they have to consider, especially in presenting their development plans for the area," he said.

Long quest

As early as 1950, the Manila Railroad Co., forerunner of the PNR, abandoned a portion of lines that extended to the port of Legazpi. It had offered train services only up to its main southern terminal on Peñaranda Street.

Later, the firm also stopped—and eventually scrapped—its popular train service to then Tabaco town, leaving its vast tracts of land idle. That provided informal settlers an opportunity to occupy the area, which has come to be known as Looban and extended up to San Roque.

It was only in 1970 when the settlers in Looban and San Roque were organized by the Parish Ecumenical Council for Community Organizing and their group became a member of the LCFSI. They began to negotiate with the government-run railway firm to realize their dream of owning their lots.

On Dec. 9, 1992, former PNR General Manager Jose Dado met with LCSFI officers and expressed willingness to sell the property to qualified residents. On March 4, 1993, the city's appraisal committee was established to determine the fair market value of the property.

Appeal for help

For four years, the LCSFI did not receive any word from the PNR. On Feb. 25, 1998, it decided to write to then Transportation Secretary Josefina Lichauco and appealed to hasten the disposition of the abandoned PNR lots.

On July 15, 1998, the group sought the help of Karina Constantino David, then chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) in asking then President Joseph Estrada to issue a proclamation declaring the PNR lots as socialized housing sites for the urban poor.

On Aug. 11, 1998, HUDCC Director Ronald Fontanillas agreed to assist the LCSFI in negotiating with the PNR to finalize the intent to sell, appraise and price the lots. Fifteen days later, the city endorsed to the PNR-Manila the disposition of Lot No. 1728 in Barangay 33 of PNR Looban.

Twist

In a strange twist of events, the PNR presented on June 26, 1999 a controversial proposal to sell 90 percent of its unused properties to informal settlers, provided they would agree to a reblocking. The remaining land would be excluded as a commercial area to be titled in the name of Bicol Produce Corp. and developed to subsidize the low selling price of the main property.

The LCSFI pointed out that delineating the commercial area would be problematic.

On May 7, 2001, Ms Arroyo issued PP 40, but it took another four years before the PNR decided to enter into a new agreement with the city.

"We have remained vigilant all these years, for we know that we are continuously struggling," said De la Torre.. "But we're hopeful that someday, thousands of people occupying PNR abandoned lots will live in peace for there is an assurance of security of tenure."

One of the issues that the LCSFI discussed with the PNR-Manila was its declaration last year that Barangay 39-Bonot (17,000 sqm)—where 600 families occupy Lot Nos. 9724, 9728 and 618—was not part of the lots that the company had wanted to sell to the present settlers.

In 1996, these were declared among the properties that the PNR would sell to the actual occupants. "We don't know where all these people will go, for all of the PNR abandoned lots are now occupied by actual residents," said De la Torre.

The railway firm, however, stressed that the lots were part of the P48.93-billion project to rehabilitate and reconstruct the PNR Mainline South and the Sorsogon extension project, which will start this year and be completed in 2008.

Puerto Princesa, resort celebrate full moon festival

By Jofelle P. Tesorio
Puerto Princesa City

FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE NIGHT CLOUDS AND the moon were playing hide-and-seek as the resort guests were completely awed by the performances that started with a "warrior dance."

Soon after, both performers and guests of the high-end Dos Palmas Resort in the middle of Honda Bay in Puerto Princesa City were dancing along with the lunar sideshow.

The resort's general manager, Ivan Lim, said he planned to stage a monthly "Pabilugon," or full moon festival that will feature artists, including his talented staff.

It will also be another attraction for the guests, he quipped.

During the first Pabilugon at Dos Palmas, most of the performers were staff members who have found life on the islet a bit monotonous and entertaining the guests a welcome respite.

Although Jan. 13 was not exactly the night when the moon was in full shine, Lim said, the festival was held because he had to be in Manila the next day and he wanted to see how it was done in Dos Palmas.

Pabilugon, a Cuyunon term for full moon, started four years ago.

City tourism officer Bimbo Fernandez, who initiated the festival, said Pabilugon had been observed by the Cuyunon natives centuries ago, to honor the Creator for the good harvest and good health.

Just recently, the term Pabilugon was changed into "Bulan-bulawan" (golden moon). In Cuyunon, *bulan* means moon and *bulawan* means gold.

Puerto Princesa celebrated the full moon festival the following night at the Honda Bay wharf.

Lim said he would start screening his staff for talents who would alternately perform during the festivals in the coming months.

Dos Palmas has beat the odds after Abu Sayyaf bandits kidnapped some of its guests and staff members in 2001.

Following adverse publicity arising from the incident, the resort temporarily closed. It is now enjoying big tourist arrivals, as if nothing bad had happened.

The resort has also upgraded its facilities to provide guests "the ultimate" in vacation and adventure.

It has a new entertainment area adjacent to the main banquet hall where guests can sing their hearts out in the karaoke music lounge, play billiards, and enjoy a night of music with in-house entertainers.

The imposing mural of sea creatures in clear blue waters in the billiards hall was designed by the resort's resident artist Jonathan Benitez. For art patrons, the resort built a gallery where special works of Benitez are sold.

For the techies, Dos Palmas plans to put up an Internet café with DSL services that are twice as fast as the regular Internet facilities in the city.

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Notice is hereby given that the final draws has been held in the presence of an independent auditor KPMG Certified Public Accountant, a representative from the Department of Trade and Industry on January 12, 2006 at the offices of Reader's Digest in Hong Kong. The Local First Prize was drawn on January 5, 2006 at the offices of A-Z Direct Marketing, Inc.

The Reader's Digest official list of winners should all cases be conclusive. All the winners will be notified by registered mail on how to claim the prize. In case of queries, please contact us at A-Z DIRECT MARKETING INC.
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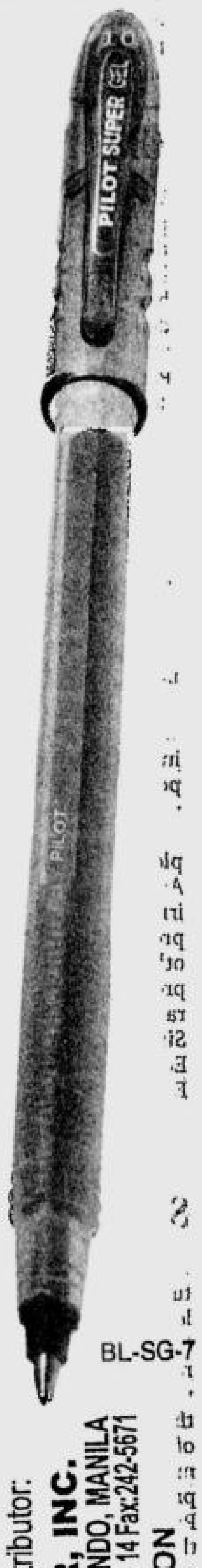

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US toxic wastes kill 2 more, says group

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

MABALACAT, PAMPANGA—A WOMAN BELONGing to a group of 47 people who tested positive for high levels of arsenic and lead in their blood after living in an evacuation center said to be contaminated with military pollutants, died of a kidney ailment last week.

Rosalinda Pineda, 54, was the first to die among the "Cabcom 47," the People's Task Force for Bases Cleanup (PTFBC) said on Wednesday.

Cabcom was the Clark Air Base Command, which the defunct Mt. Pinatubo Commission converted into a temporary refuge for victims of Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions and lahar. Nearly 35,000 people lived there until 2000 when the government closed the facility.

The area was deemed contaminated by toxic wastes from the operations of US military bases and it was needed as a station for the NorthRail project.

Pineda, displaced by the disaster from Porac, lived at Cabcom for four years and was transferred to the Madapdap resettlement, according to the PTFBC that monitored the health conditions of the Cabcom 47.

She was buried on Jan. 12, her mother, Ofelia Calaguas, said.

Last week, a former evacuee, Rogelio Banque, 37, died of a liver-related illness.

Myrla Baldonado, PTFBC executive director, said Pineda was one of the 97 respondents in the random study, "Health and Environmental Assessment of the Impact of Toxic Waste in Clark, Pampanga," conducted by the National Poison Control and the Department of Health in March 2000 and September 2004.

Baldonado said the DOH had not announced the results of the study or shared its findings with the task force.

Reached by the INQUIRER, the DOH in Central Luzon confirmed that the study was undertaken but said the report was in its national office.

Records obtained by the task force showed that Pineda had 108 ug/dl (microgram per deciliter) of lead in her blood or six times higher than the DOH average of 18.74 ug/dl.

Pineda was part of the group of 15 adults and nine children the DOH sent to a 15-day detoxification program at the Philippine General Hospital in Manila. The program was stopped due to lack of funds, it was learned.

Pineda's daughter, Rose Anne, 12, also tested high for lead and arsenic.

Calaguas said Pineda's death stirred fear among her neighbors at Madapdap, who also lived at Cabcom for four to six years.

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

LUCKY PET

A staff member of the Baguio Patriotic School checks one of two dragons given to the city by China. Baguio was the third in the Philippines to receive the dragons, which are believed to bring good luck.

DA: Pesticide use big challenge to organic farming

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—ALthough the government has recognized the productive and marketing potentials of organic farming, farmers' dependence on commercial farm inputs is a big factor in making the practice part of mainstream agriculture, officials said.

Cesar Rodriguez, director of the Department of Agriculture in the Cordillera, said such dependence on commercial inputs was being seriously considered by his office as a challenge in formulating policies that will spur organic farming in the country.

In the vegetable producing towns of the Cordillera, researchers found that the use of commercial pesticides and insecticides had become part of a farming culture and an obstacle to efforts to convince farmers to go organic.

Rodriguez said the problem could be solved by providing farmers intensive training on organic farming, support services and planting materials.

Rodriguez represented Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban at the opening of the First Cordillera Organic Agriculture Congress at the Benguet State University here on Friday.

He said the DA continued to be aggressive in promoting two programs to complement organic farming—the integrated pest management program and the "Agri-Kalikasan," a community-based program of producing organic fertilizers.

Dr. Carlito Laurean, BSU research director, said Benguet's vegetable farms were acidic due to the extensive use of pesticides and insecticides.

"Soil fertility has been severely damaged due to the long and continuous use of these farm inputs," he said.

"The practice has become a part of their farming systems and it would take quite sometime to convince them to stop using these inputs."

But Rodriquez said organic farming was not a new farming practice. *Delmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Negros plans auction of lands to collect realty taxes

DUMAGUETE CITY—THE provincial treasurer's office will auction off pieces of property of delinquent taxpayers in Negros Oriental in a bid to collect some P105 million in unpaid real estate taxes.

Danilo Mendez, provincial treasurer, said this would be the first massive auction by the provincial government.

Mendez said more than 90 percent of the pieces of property are land. All of the delinquent real estate taxpayers are individuals, he added.

Mendez said the pieces of property of the top 30 delinquent taxpayers in every municipality would be the first to be auctioned off.

Mendez said Guihulngan town had the highest delinquency rate in real estate taxes, with P19 million in collectibles. Last year, the municipality's collection efficiency was only 20 percent, he said.

Other towns with high rates of real estate tax delinquency are Mabinay (P12 million) and Sta. Catalina (P8 million).

The town of Vallehermoso has the lowest unpaid real estate taxes of only about P1 million.

Mendez said the auction would be held to generate income for the municipalities and the provincial government. *Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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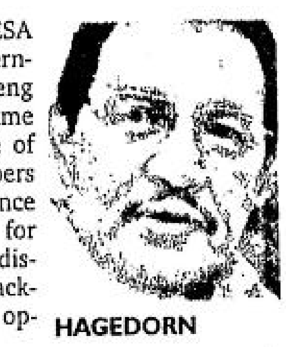
'Jueteng' return traced to lack of alternatives



HAGEDORN

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The government's anti-jueteng czar pinned the blame for the resurgence of the illegal numbers game on the absence of alternatives for workers who were displaced by the crackdown on "jueteng" operations.

Edward Hagedorn, mayor of this city and President Macapagal-Arroyo's anti-jueteng chief, said the return of jueteng came shortly after the task force that he heads submitted a report on its accomplishments.

Hagedorn said part of the report is a recommendation to replace jueteng with a legal numbers game.

Among the recommendations of Hagedorn was the revival of small town lottery, a game that Bishop Oscar Cruz, an anti-jueteng advocate, said was just like jueteng.

Hagedorn said his task force's accomplishments would be laid to waste if no alternative was put in jueteng's place as betting on the illegal numbers game has resumed in Luzon.

He said one of his task force's accomplishment was a covenant to put a stop to jueteng that was signed by more than 400 mayors in a convention here last year.

He said most jueteng lords had stopped the illegal numbers game, except for one Charing Magbuhos, who "has shown defiance against our quest," and financiers of guerrilla-type operations.

But the Arroyo administration, he said, had not acted on the task force's recommendations.

He said alternatives to jueteng were needed because bigger crimes could take its place.

Authorities reported the return of jueteng in Quezon and some parts of Luzon. They said gambling lords had resorted to guerrilla type operations to evade arrests.

The government started to crack down on jueteng following allegations that members of the First Family, particularly the President's husband and son, were receiving payoffs from operators.

The allegations are being investigated by the Senate, in which a witness named Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez as among the country's biggest gambling lords. Sanchez has denied the allegation but he was never called to the Senate investigation. *Geraldford P. Ticke, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

OWWA opens livelihood desk

READY FOR BUSINESS!

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO

TUGUEGARAO CITY—The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and the city government opened an overseas Filipino workers' desk to help families of OFWs in the city start livelihood programs. Manuela Peña, OWWA-Cagayan Valley director, and Mayor Randolph Ting signed a memorandum of agreement to help families of OFWs put up and sustain small- and medium-enterprises through the OFW desk maintained by OWWA.
Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

No charges in boat tragedy

SAN RICARDO, Southern Leyte—Relatives of those who died in a boat tragedy in Sunday's fluvial parade here won't press charges against the vice mayor who owned the vessel that overturned. Dr. Bonifacio de Guzman, municipal health officer and designated by Mayor Virginia Mejia as spokesperson for the town, said the families of the victims understood that the vice mayor acted "in good faith." "It was an accident no one wanted (to happen). We would not ask any financial assistance from the boat owners," said survivor Dr. Jesus Culajara, 45, a physician in Palompon, Leyte, who lost two young relatives in the accident.
Jani Arnaiz and Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Negros city mayor dies

BACOLOD CITY—Mayor Anthony Valderrama Lizares of Talisay City, Negros Occidental died of multiple organ failure at the Riverside Medical Center here on Monday. He would have turned 39 on Tuesday. Lizares, who was suffering from a liver disease, was brought to the hospital on Jan. 1 and placed in the intensive care unit on Sunday night after he suffered from massive bleeding and became comatose, said the attending physician, Dr. John Ledesma.
Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

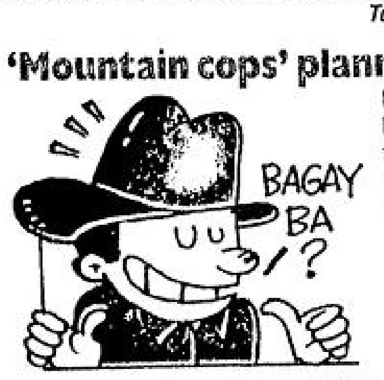
ARMM co-ops dying

COTABATO CITY—Of the 6,332 small cooperatives in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, only 30-40 percent are "alive and functioning" and the rest are dormant. Mahendra Madjilon, Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) regional administrator, said 60-70 percent of the cooperatives in its list "are only paper cooperatives." He said the CDA, which devolved to the ARMM in 1997, has yet to take action against cooperatives that have been mismanaged. Madjilon attributed the failure of the cooperatives to lack of information and know how.

Tourists pour in P2.3B

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—At least 114,664 foreign tourists, who arrived through budget flights at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport here, contributed an estimated P2.3 billion to the economy of Central Luzon in 2005, a Department of Tourism official said. The figure was based on a survey showing that international tourists, who stayed for an average of four days, spent $114 daily, Ronaldo Tiotuico, DOT regional director, said in a statement. According to the survey, visitors spent money on hotels, food and shopping. They came for holiday tours, visits to friends and relatives, or shopping adventures. Quoting DMIA arrival reports, Korean tourists outnumbered other Asian visitors. Asiana Airlines serves the South Korea-Clark route.
Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

'Mountain cops' planned



BAGUIO CITY—The positive feedback for reinstating tourism police officers in Cordillera's tourist destinations, like Banaue in Ifugao, Sagada in Mt. Province and this city, has emboldened the Philippine National Police to introduce the next stage of its police visibility strategy. Policemen, wearing cowboy hats and boots and riding horses, may soon be patrolling Cordillera roads that have become havens for highway robbers, said Chief Supt. Leonardo Dionisio, Cordillera police director. The proposal, which included a design for "mountain cop" uniforms, was sent to the National Police Commission, Dionisio said.
Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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METRO

Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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SIMPLE PLEASURES
A group of children amuse themselves by crossing a makeshift bridge at the Baseco Compound in Tondo, Manila, while two others bathe in the murky waters underneath. RAFFY LERMA

Wire thieves go underground

By Jocelyn R. Uy

WIRE THIEVES STRUCK ANEW IN MUNTINLUPA City over the weekend, taking even bolder steps to achieve their goal.

A 650-meter stretch of underground electric wires used for lampposts installed along the length of Susana Heights in Barangay Tunasan was lost to the syndicate on Saturday night, police said.

Deviating from the usual, the wire thieves—who usually climb up the posts to steal cable and electric wires—concentrated on underground cables this time, city public information office head Tez Navarro told the INQUIRER yesterday. The city engineering office pegged the cost of the stolen electric wires at P24,000.

"The members of the syndicate are good at what they are doing because they know how to cut the wires without getting electrocuted," Navarro said.

Last year, the local police had recorded more than three incidents of wire theft. Last Dec. 16—the last recorded wire theft incident for 2005—about 24 meters of electric wires were carted away by three suspected members of the syndicate in Barangay Cupang. The police identified two of the suspects as Agustin Napili, 36 and Tammy Motenciano, 34. The two are still at large.

Vic Navarro, city engineering office head, said earlier that in 2005 alone, the local government already lost to the syndicate around P180,000 worth of electrical wires with copper filling used for street lights.

Called the "Copper Gang" by police, the group strikes after midnight in deserted streets, usually during a heavy downpour. The copper extracted from the wires is later sold to junk shops for P110 to P120 a kilo.

City police chief Senior Supt. Rongavilla told the INQUIRER that they have yet to zero in on the leaders of the syndicate, although some members have already been arrested.

"We have intensified police visibility in areas where they usually strike, like the East and West Service Roads from Barangays Alabang to Cupang," Rongavilla added.

Mayor Jaime Fresnedi also ordered plainclothes operatives composed of the police and the staff of the Public Order and Safety Office, apart from community leaders, to watch over these "hot spots."

The US stands firm, so what now?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

NOW THAT WASHINGTON HAS MADE A firm stand not to turn over to our courts the four US Marines charged with raping a Filipino woman, what will the Philippine government do, break off relations with the US?

The hotheads among us would want to do that.

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago calls for the termination of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in light of the controversy.

The basis for the firm stand of the US is a provision in the VFA. The provision states that the US will have custody of American servicemen charged in our courts for the duration of their trial.

If we terminate the VFA, we would lose more than what we would gain.

Let's face it, we need the United States more than it needs us, especially in the war against terrorism.

I may sound like a colonial, but that's the reality. (Besides, I was born when the Americans were already gone as our colonial masters.)

If not for the US, do you think we would have smashed the notorious terrorist group Abu Sayyaf all by our lonesome? The US provides modern technology and reward money for the arrest of some Abu Sayyaf leaders.

The swaggering Abu Sabaya, the terrorist group's spokesperson, was cornered and killed by our troops because of a tracking device linked to a satellite. Who came up with the tracking device that was placed inside Sabaya's backpack, our ill-equipped military intelligence units?

The US continues to give monetary rewards for the capture of other Abu Sayyaf leaders.

The latest reward put up by the US government amounting to $100,000 was given to a Filipino informant. The informant, who told on an Abu Sayyaf leader, was most probably a Muslim and a minor member of the group. Without the money, which our government can't put up, do you think that stool pigeon would have come forward?

Next time our legislators propose the scrapping of the VFA, they should first think twice, thrice before opening their mouths.

We have to be practical and realistic like Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Joker Arroyo in solving the impasse. Let's exhaust all remedies through dialogue.

Drilon said Malacañang and the Department of Foreign Affairs should move for a thorough review of the VFA to correct its lopsided provisions. "I don't think the position of the US Embassy is justified," said the Senate President.

Senator Arroyo, for his part, said: "I think we should first explore the possibility of the two countries agreeing. It's too early to terminate the VFA. This is diplomacy, and diplomacy means that we talk first."

***

A TOP executive of a big radio-TV network allegedly supplies Ecstasy, a prohibited drug, to guest relations officers (GROs) or entertainers of a well-known nightclub when he goes to that place.

The executive is known among network insiders as a user of Ecstasy and cocaine, which is inhaled much like methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu). Cocaine is used by the rich while shabu is for poor addicts.

If the report is true, that makes the top network honcho a drug pusher, although he doesn't sell the banned item to the GROs.

His purpose in giving Ecstasy to the GROs was for them to become excited enough to give in to his carnal desires. Ecstasy arouses the libido of its user.

***

SECRETARY Mike Defensor's arrival in Malacañang will inject a youthful vigor into the old and weary bunch of advisers to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Defensor, now the presidential chief of staff, is still in his 30s, the Benjamin in the Arroyo Cabinet.

His enthusiasm for work may infect the Palace *manongs* and *manangs* who, according to some insiders, are just clock watchers.

Cell phone probe underway in mall

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE GREENHILLS Shopping Center in San Juan has started its own investigation into a report that two television reporters who lost their cell phones to thieves found the units on sale in stalls inside the shopping area early this week.

"We are conducting our investigation on whether or not to hold the two stall owners liable," General Manager Joey Santos told the INQUIRER yesterday.

He said the decision whether or not to blacklist the stall owners would be known "within the week."

Santos said they would determine if the two stall owners "complied with the listed precautionary measures" to determine whether or not the cell phones they were selling had been stolen.

ABC-5 employee Theresa Andrada lost her company-issued XDA-II phone early Saturday morning, only to find it displayed in a stall owned by Abdulmalik Basher in the shopping center hours later. Basher later returned the allegedly stolen phone to the person who had traded it in, and then sold Andrada another phone at a much lower price.

But after checking the serial number, the phone turned out to be the same one stolen earlier from a fellow reporter, Jason Torres.

'Hot' figures from Makati

By Tarra V. Quismundo

FIRST, THE BAD NEWS. There were more fires reported in Makati, the country's financial district, last year. The 171 fires, up 28 percent from 2004 figures, were also more destructive, causing P80.1 million worth of damage to property, based on statistics culled by the city's Fire Department.

Now, the good news. Only three lives were lost to fires in 2005, compared to 13 the previous year.

In 2004, there were 134 incidents of fire which left P55 million worth of damage to property.

"Although we concentrated on fire prevention activities throughout the year, there were still fire incidents. That's inevitable. The increase does not necessarily mean that we were less efficient in the last year than before," said Chief Insp. Rogelio Bucayu, Makati's Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) officer in charge.

He added that most of the fires last year—or 65 cases—were short-lived blazes which started in electrical posts or household electrical outlets.

Forty-one other incidents, on the other hand, were classified as minor structural fires, meaning, these started in houses or establishments.

Some 32 incidents of rubbish fire, or fire which started in garbage piles, were also reported, one incident more than the 31 reported in 2004.

Twenty-one vehicular fires also occurred last year, up from 18 in 2004.

Eight fires were due to leaks in liquefied petroleum gas tanks.

Grass fires, meantime, were down to three last year, from six in 2004.

"Generally, fire incidents are caused by electricity, including faulty wiring, overloading, illegal connections. That's why the best fire prevention tip I could give is for households and establishments to have regular checkups of their electrical wiring," Bucayu said.

Candles, another common cause of fire, should be used with utmost care, he added.

Shoemakers bat for truth in labeling

SUPPORTING LOCAL INDUSTRIES by patronizing Filipino companies? Better make sure first that they are really selling Philippine-made products.

Warning that even big local shoe manufacturers have started importing shoes from China, a group of small-scale shoemakers in Marikina City has asked buyers to be more discriminating.

The Samahan ng Magsasapatos sa Pilipinas has sounded an alarm on what it described as the "dying" backyard shoe industry in Marikina City, once dubbed as the "Shoe Capital of the Philippines."

"We Filipinos are also to blame," city councilor Vic Sabiniano, the group president, told the INQUIRER.

"We always think that it is better to buy imported brands, neglecting our own industries," he said.

"The government should require local shoe manufacturers to declare whether or not the products they are selling are imported or locally made," said Joel Gaudia, the group's spokesperson. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

METROBRIEFS

Cop killed in front of son

A POLICEMAN was shot and killed Tuesday evening in front of his 21-year-old son in Caloocan City. The policeman was identified as Jose de los Reyes Cruz, 46, assigned at the Warrant and Subpoena Section of the Quezon City Police Dictrict. He and his son were on their way home on board a passenger jeep when two men on board a motorcycle drew alongside the vehicle and shot the victim. Cruz, who was hit in the arm and body, was rushed to a hospital where he was declared dead by doctors. ***Nancy C. Carvajal***

Beware of fake money

THE VALENZUELA City police have warned business establishments in the city to beware of fake P1,000 bills after two women carrying 10 counterfeit bills were arrested Tuesday. The suspects were identified as Leonora Moriles, 31, of Pulang Lupa, Valenzuela, and Sandie Santos, of Maypajo, Caloocan City. Senior Insp. Roderick San Juan, of the Valenzuela police, said the two went to the Royal Mall and bought a secondhand cell phone worth P2,000. The saleslady, however, became suspicious of the P1,000 bills given by the suspects and alerted the police. The two women were later apprehended at a fast food restaurant inside the mall. They claimed, however, that they did not know that the bills were fake and that an uncle had given them the money. The police said the P1,000 bills taken from the women would be sent to the Central Bank of the Philippines for examination. ***Nancy C. Carvajal***

Rob attempt foiled

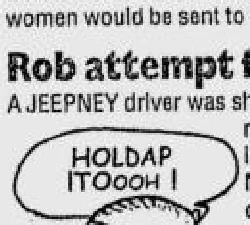
HOLDAP ITOooH !

ILLUSTRATION STEPH BRAVO

A JEEPNEY driver was shot dead, while a passenger and a suspected thief were wounded in a botched robbery attempt the other night in Quezon City. Wilfredo Tulipas, 36, was driving his Panay Avenue-bound jeepney along Commonwealth Avenue (Mariano Marcos Avenue) in front of the Asian Institute of Tourism, at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, when two men suddenly announced a holdup. Armed with a .22-caliber "paltik" revolver, the unidentified suspects tried to get the belongings of those on board, but Tulipas resisted, according to a report by SPO1 Salvador Buenviaje of the Quezon City Police District criminal investigation division. One of the suspects then shot Tulipas in the back of the head, killing him instantly and causing the passengers to panic and jump out of the jeepney. The suspects also fired at the fleeing passengers, wounding Rose Gomez, 30, an employee of a telecommunication company, in the lower back. One suspect tried to get on another jeepney but the driver, Roel Abarra, hit him on the head with a lead pipe, police said. Gomez and the suspect were taken to a hospital for treatment. ***DJ Yap***

Manila Water

Water interruption in portion of Cainta and Taytay needed to upgrade facilities

INVESTING IN PIPELINES FOR THE FUTURE

Manila Water is regularly upgrading its facilities to improve the distribution of water in the East Zone. As part of the program, a new booster pump will be installed inside Brookside Subdivision which will result in a temporary cutoff of water supply. The interruption will begin 8:00 p.m., Thursday, January 19, 2006, up to 4:00 a.m., January 20. Affected areas will be: Brookside Subd., Youngstown Subd., Montevista, Don Mariano Subd., Bayanihan Village, Valleygolf Ave., Palmera Heights, Glaxo Smithkline, Janssenville, Nat'l Panasonic, SEB Comml and Brgy. Sta. Ana & San Isidro, L. Wood, E. Rodriguez, Philec Road, Gregoria Heights and Brgy. Dolores, all in Taytay.

Manila Water Company advises all residents of the said areas to store enough water prior to the scheduled interruptions to avoid inconvenience.

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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

Barako advance vs Kings

By June Navarro

JAMES PENNY LET HIS TEAMmates sparkle as the Barako swept their San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference quarterfinal duel with the Alaska Aces with a resounding 81-65 win last night at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Lordy Tugade, the chief recipient of Penny's unselfish plays, drilled in 17 of his game-high 24 points in the first half and turned an expected Game 3 thriller into a sleeper.

Enrico Villanueva also had several open looks at the basket and finished with 12 points, mostly as a result of mismatches created by Penny in the shaded area as the Barako easily wrapped up the best-of-five series.

Talk 'N Text found Davin Ham a poor replacement for Damien Cantrell as the Air21 Express turned back the Phone Pals, 98-93, to take a 2-1 lead in their own quarterfinal encounter.

Led by Willy Arboleda and Renren Ritualo, the Express seized the lead in the third quarter and stayed there for good as Ham, a member of the 2004 NBA champion Detroit Pistons, finished with 16 points.

"He (Penny) lets the locals score if they need to," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao, who will take on coach Siot Tanquingcen and the Barangay Ginebra Kings in a best-of-seven semifinal series.

After Red Bull padded its lead to 60-38, Mike Cortez tried to save the Aces from sinking.

Game 1 of the semifinal series will be on Sunday.

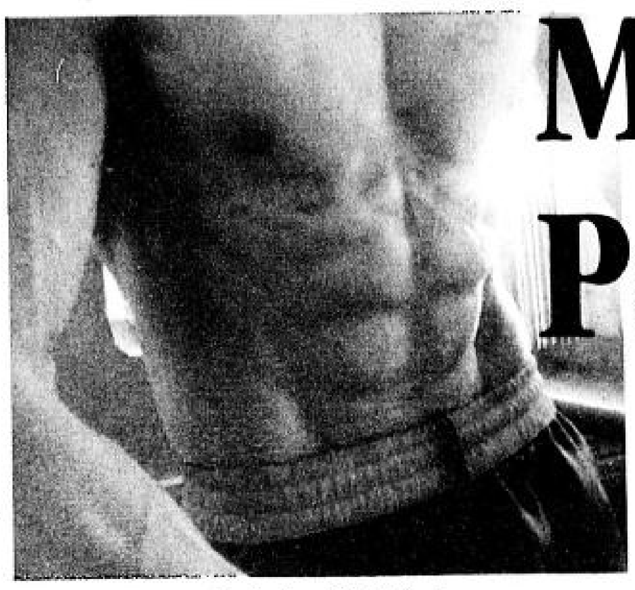
The scores:

First Game

RED BULL 81—Tugade 24, Penny 16, Villanueva 12, Torion 7, Pennisi 6, Bugia 4, Fonacier 3, Bagulo 3, Robinson 2, Cruz 2, Valenzuela 2, Najorda 0.

ALASKA 65—Cortez 18, Carlason 13, Bradley 11, Allado 8, Hugnatan 6, Cablay 5, Thoss 2, Dela Cruz 2, Alvarez 0, Padilla 0.

Quarters: 18-19, 49-32, 65-47, 81-65.



PACQUIAO bares his finely-chiseled body. RECAH TRINIDAD

Morales camp says Pacquiao can't win

By Recah Trinidad

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—Manny Pacquiao was told yesterday why he would be on the losing end in his rematch against Erik Morales on Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

"He comes in using what he has learned from his mistakes, but we will fight using what we've learned from victory," Fernando Beltran, manager of Erik "El Terrible" Morales, told the INQUIRER after a brief welcome for the Mexican group at the Wynn's Hotel and Casino here.

Unlike last year, there was no mariachi band to usher in the Mexican boxing great, but the horde of eager reporters, including those from the Philippines, lent a festive mood to the austere back-lobby welcome at the Wynn's Las Vegas.

Morales, sunburnt and robust unlike last March when he showed up pale and wan for his first encounter with Pacquiao at MGM Grand, confirmed that, just like Pacquiao, he would make necessary adjustments and improve on his winning formula.

"This promises to be a great fight because Pacquiao is strong, brave and good and would surely lend character to the fight," Morales, 29, explained through his manager.

Then, reacting to earlier verbal tirades from the Pacquiao camp, Morales remarked that he, too, deserves respect.

"It would be fine if he's able to put into action what he has been mouthing all along," Morales explained in a soft but clear voice.

Morales, who planed in from Mexico, couldn't have picked a more dramatic time to return to this glittering capital, sight of his biggest fights.

He moved into the corridors of the Wynn's Las Vegas exactly after the sports book in the fabulous hotel-casino had announced that the odds for The Battle have leveled off.

Morales and Pacquiao were even choices among bettors, with equal minus-110 percentage.

That means a $110 bet for either fighter would pay only $100.

Morales had actually pushed ahead, 10-8, after Pacquiao was pegged the 7-5 choice earlier.

Experts point to skill, height advantage and vast experience as the stronger points in the Morales arsenal.

But Pacquiao provides a worthy, dangerous challenge with his edge in speed, power and the oft-repeated vow to come up with necessary adjustments based on the first encounter won by Morales by decision last March.

Manny fight live

MANNY PACQUIAO, THE boxer not the actor, hits the big screen Sunday morning at SM cinemas nationwide.

Solar Sports, in partnership with SM, will show the live satellite feed of Pacquiao's super featherweight rematch with Erik Morales of Mexico in selected theaters.

The viewers will witness the drama as it unfolds at 8 a.m. at the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas, Nevada for P300. There will be no commercial break.

The bout will also be shown simultaneously on ABS-CBN Channel 2 and on Solar Sports starting at around 10 a.m.

The event dubbed as "The Battle" will also be shown at Rockwell Powerplant theaters.

Pacman set to break barriers against Erik

By Recah Trinidad

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—A DAY after showing off a balanced, more polished Manny Pacquiao, trainer Freddie Roach yesterday made another bold move by baring how they plan to soften and crush Erik Morales.

"We're gonna break him down," Roach told the INQUIRER before a mini press conference in a borrowed gym here where Pacquiao later limbered up for over an hour to maintain peak form.

The idea, Roach said, was to pound at a weak part of Morales' anatomy.

"We go more to the body this time, just like what Barrera had done in beating him," Roach confided.

Pacuiao displayed newfound defensive and attacking skills in his final workout at the Wild Card gym in Hollywood Monday.

But reminded that digging into the body of a counter-attack specialist like Morales would be equal to breaking through a fortress, Roach said they would push the intensity level higher.

He said they would work to move away from a sticky tactical battle and instead emphasize on superior speed and power to break the barriers expected to be erected by Morales through his superior style and skills.

Roach admitted they had erred in taking Morales lightly last March.

"There will be no repeat of that, we promise a turnaround," Roach said.

With his ferocious, devil-may-care stance, there's no denying Pacquiao's specific goal is to stop Morales.

But after acknowledging that Morales has never been stopped in over 50 pro fights, Roach said they would also go for the rounds.

He said they would box and gain the necessary points.

Senate nixes more funds for Pinoy athletes

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WHILE THE EUPHORIA OVER THE 23rd Southeast Asian Games triumph has yet to die down, the Senate, it seems, was hardly affected by it all.

Brushing off the P250 million budget recommendation of the Lower House and the P304 million proposed by the Philippine Sports Commission, the Senate committee on finance instead approved just P28 million for sports development this year.

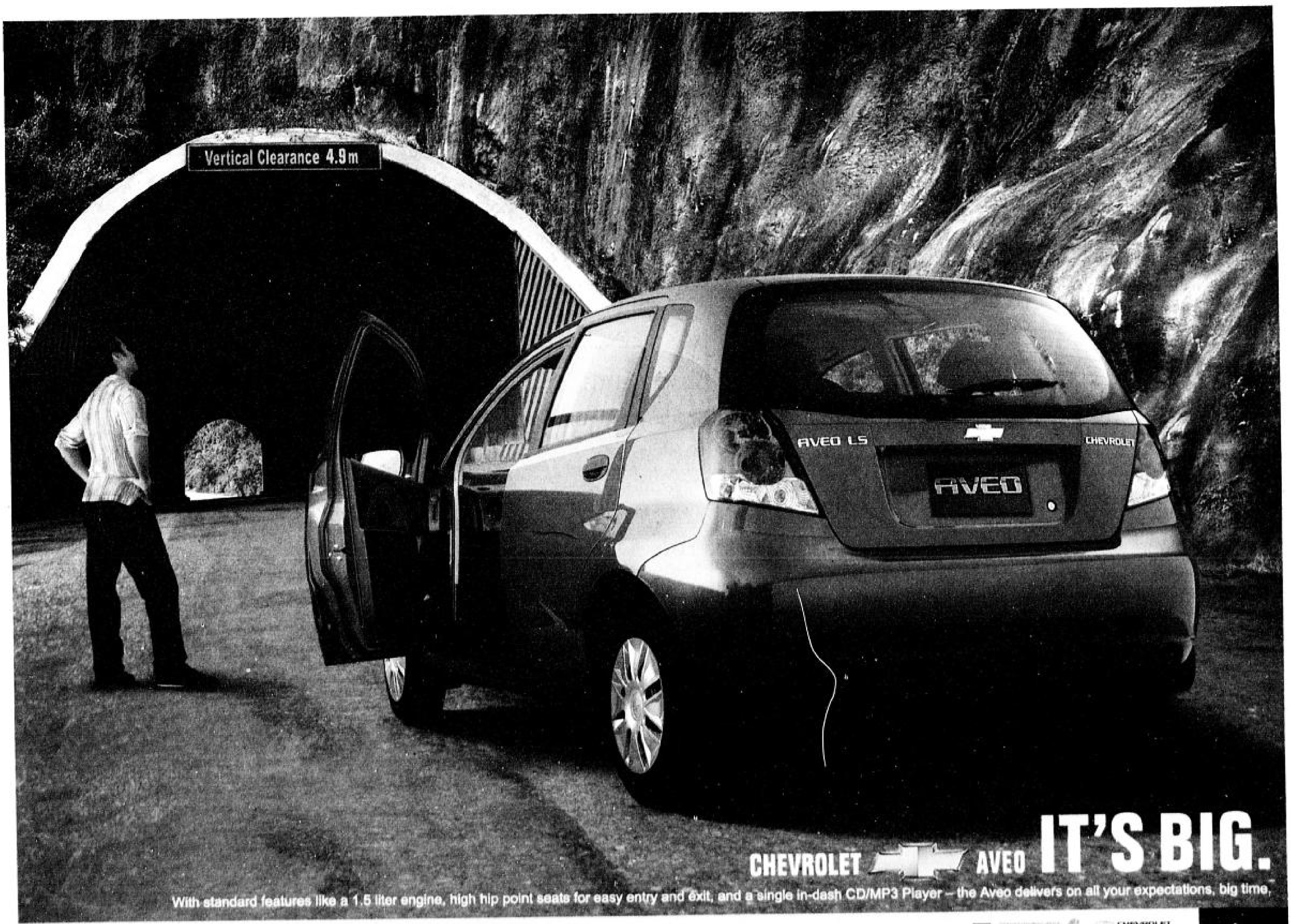
If it's any consolation, the amount was P1 million higher than last year's budget.

Sports officials rued the Senate's decision which they said was unexpected considering the honors bestowed on the national athletes for bagging the SEA Games overall title.

Just recently, President Macapagal-Arroyo joined the Philippine Sportswriters Association in honoring them as the PSA's Athlete of the Year.

"I think we were caught in a crossfire," said a sports official who refused to be named.

Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella admitted there are "differences" with the senators but remained hopeful they would be more considerate during the bicameral meeting where the national budget will be finalized and approved.



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GAMES TODAY (San Andres Gym)
2 p.m.—Montana vs Granny Goose
4 p.m.—Hapee-PCU vs Harbour Centre

NOT MANY EXPECTED THEM TO GO PAST the elimination round.

After proving their critics wrong, the Harbour Centre Portmasters now shoot for a semifinal seat against the Hapee-PCU Teethmasters in the PBL Heroes Cup at 4 p.m. today at the San Andres Gym.

Granny Goose Tortillos will also vie for a semifinal slot versus the Montaña Jewels at 2 p.m.

Toting twice-to-beat advantages, Harbour Centre and Granny Goose only need to win once in the quarterfinals to advance to the Final Four.

Rain or Shine and Magnolia Ice Cream already claimed the first two semifinal slots after posting the best records in the elimination round.

Coach Jorge Gallent felt relieved that his Portmasters claimed the quarterfinal bonus, but noted that a Teethmasters comeback remains a possibility so a new game plan would be in order.

Jasmine W. Payo

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City

SEC MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 1
SERIES OF 2006

GUIDELINES ON THE FILING OF FUNCTIONAL CURRENCY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Commission in its meeting of January 10, 2006, resolved to issue this Circular to guide companies whose functional currency (i.e., the currency of the primary economic environment in which the company operates) is other than the Philippine peso and which company file financial statements expressed in that functional currency.

1. The company's determination of its functional currency shall be made in accordance with PAS 21, *The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates*.
2. A company that files for the first time financial statements denominated in a currency other than Philippine peso ("functional currency FS") for statutory reporting purposes shall notify the Commission that it shall file such financial statements, with an assessment that supports the determination of its functional currency. Please see attached *Annex "A"* for an illustrative notification.
3. The notification shall be signed by the company's chief executive officer and chief financial officer. It shall be accompanied by a report from the company's external auditor indicating his/her assessment that the company's determination of its functional currency was made in accordance with PAS 21. Please see attached *Annex "B"* for an illustrative report of the external auditor.
4. A company whose functional currency is other than the Philippine peso that chooses to present financial statements expressed in Philippine peso shall submit financial statements expressed in both its functional currency and in Philippine peso. The company shall (a) translate its functional currency financial statements into Philippine pesos in accordance with PAS 21 and (b) submit a notification to the Commission in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) above.
5. The notification shall be filed within forty-five (45) days after the end of the year in which the company intends to initially present a functional currency FS.
6. In the case of a change in functional currency, the company shall file a notice indicating the proposed change including the reasons thereof within thirty (30) days after the end of year in which the change occurred. The notice shall be signed and accompanied by a report of the company's external auditor in the manner described in paragraph (3) above.

The submission of the said notice is without prejudice to any objection that the Commission may raise on the proposed change taking into account the previous representations by the company and the principles set forth under PAS 21.

This Circular shall be published in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines and shall take effect fifteen (15) days after the date of the last publication.

Failure to comply with the foregoing Guidelines shall render the financial statements of the company non-compliant with the applicable rules and shall subject the company concerned to the appropriate sanctions provided for in the existing laws.

Signed on behalf of the Commission on January 11, 2006, Mandaluyong City, Philippines.

(Sgd.) **FE B. BARIN**
Chairperson

ANNEX "A"

Illustrative Notification to the SEC on Filing of Functional Currency Financial Statements

To: Securities and Exchange Commission

Pursuant to the requirement of paragraph (6)(c) of SRC Rule 68. *(name of Company)* notifies the Commission that it will file its financial statements expressed in *(indicate functional currency)* starting in *(year)*.

1. **Determination of Functional Currency**

Please present the following financial data to reflect the primary economic environment of the company:

a. **Revenues (at least for the immediately preceding 2 years)**

	(Year 1) In Currency	%	(Year 2) In Currency	%
Total Revenue per audited financial statements	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
Revenues in original currencies				
a. U.S. Dollars	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
b. Japanese Yen	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
c. Euro Dollars	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
d. Others (specify by currency)				

b. **Cost and Expenses (at least for the immediately preceding 2 years)**

	(Year 1) In Currency	%	(Year 2) In Currency	%
Total Cost and expenses per audited financial statements	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
Cost and expenses in original currencies				
a. U.S. Dollars	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
b. Japanese Yen	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
c. Euro Dollars	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
d. Others (specify by currency)				

c. **If the factor/s relied upon is other than those falling under paragraphs (a) & (b), discuss such other factors considered as allowed under PAS 21^1. Attach relevant support as deemed necessary.**

The following factors may also provide evidence of an entity's functional currency:

a. The currency in which funds from financing activities (i.e., issuing debt and equity instruments) are generated.
b. The currency in which receipts from operating activities are usually retained.

The following additional factors are considered in determining the functional currency of a foreign operation, and whether its functional currency is the same as that of the reporting entity (the reporting entity, in this context, being the entity that has the foreign operation as its subsidiary, branch, associate or joint venture):

a. Whether the activities of the foreign operation are carried out as an extension of the reporting entity, rather than being carried out with a significant degree of autonomy. An example of the former is when the foreign operation only sells goods imported from the reporting entity and remits the proceeds to it. An example of the latter is when the operation accumulates cash and other monetary items, incurs expenses, generates income and arranges borrowings, all substantially in its local currency.
b. Whether transactions with the reporting entity are a high or a low proportion of the foreign operation's activities.
c. Whether cash flows from the activities of the foreign operation directly affect the cash flows of the reporting entity and are readily available for remittance to it.
d. Whether cash flows from the activities of the foreign operation are sufficient to service existing and normally expected debt obligation without funds being made available by the reporting entity.

2. **Conclusion**

Based on the consideration of the above factors, which are set forth in PAS 21, *The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates*, the Company has determined that its functional currency is the *(indicate functional currency)*.

Signed under oath by:

Chief Executive Officer
Chief Finance Officer

NOTARY PUBLIC

ANNEX "B"

Illustrative Report of External Auditor to Accompany Company's Notification to the SEC on Filing of Functional Currency Financial Statements

To: (name of Company)

This report is issued in connection with (name of company's) notification to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that it will file its financial statements expressed in (indicate functional currency) starting in (year).

We have reviewed (name of company's) determination of its functional currency as described in its Notification to the SEC and we have assessed that the Company's determination of its functional currency was made in accordance with PAS 21, *The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates.*

Name and Signature of Independent CPA
BOA Registration Number
SEC Accreditation Number (if any)

(PDI - Jan. 19, 2006)

One, united basketball federation in the offing

By Musong Castillo

BEFORE THE END OF MARCH, THE country will finally have a unified basketball federation recognized by the sport's ruling international body.

The country's top basketball stakeholders emerged from a meeting last night united in their decision to respect the memorandum of understanding signed by the international basketball federation (Fiba) and the Philippine Olympic Committee and is rushing to form the new association that will pave the way for the country's reinstatement into international competition.

In the meeting presided by POC chair Robert Aventajado, the Philippine Basketball Association volunteered to facilitate the formation of the new association. The POC, meanwhile, will prepare an outline of the federation's new constitution and bylaws.

"Everybody's in agreement with respect to heeding what was stated in the MOU in its entirety," said Aventajado.

And by everybody, Aventajado meant every major stakeholder of the sport in the country. Present in last night's meeting were POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, PBA commissioner Noli Eala, PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad, UAAP's Junjun Capistrano, NCAA's Fr. Vic Calvo and Basketball Association of the Philippines president Joey Lina.

Lina's presence in the meeting means that the lifting of the suspension by the Fiba looms.

Among the items included in the MOU, signed by Aventajado, Cojuangco and Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann last year, was the formation of a new federation that will include the POC, PBA, PBL, UAAP, NCAA and the BAP.

The MOU also required the country to come up with a national federation before March 31 this year.

The group is set to meet next Monday.

The basketball squabble was the reason the sport wasn't included in the recent 23rd Southeast Asian Games the country hosted.

Pacquiao Fever

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THE PACQUIAO FEVER RENTS the air once more as Manny Pacquiao, the only certified boxing star that we have today, fights in America barely four days from now (Jan. 22). The venue of the fight is the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, the so-called Sin City of the world because, all year round, it is mostly peopled by gamblers from all corners of the globe.

It is a fight that will enthrall us all anew, it is a fight almost as big in impact as the Thrilla in Manila between Ali and Frazier on Oct. 1, 1975 (Ali won by TKO in 14 rounds), it is a fight that will most likely be the defining moment for the GenSan-born kid who went to the Big City that is Manila as a 14-year-old stowaway 13 years ago in search of the proverbial pot of gold.

He found more: Besides wealth beyond his wildest dreams (he just bought a jaw-dropping, P6-million Porsche Cayenne), he also gained fame not only here but, like the fabled Beatles of Liverpool, England, the whole world over.

He has become an international celebrity that not only do we see our own big-time politicians and hustlers line up just to see him fight live, anywhere in the world, but also some of the biggest names in boxing as well as a sprinkling of stars from Hollywood.

First it was Pancho Villa, who drew a throng to his side with his boxing exploits in America in the Roaring Twenties.

Next was Flash Elorde, the man many say is the greatest Filipino boxer of all time, whose reign of nearly 10 years as a world junior lightweight champion remains unbroken to this day.

And now Manny Pacquiao, the wealthiest of them all simply because he came in at the right time—at the right time because boxing has become, like golf and tennis, big-money business. There's just too much money in boxing nowadays that a boxer having both a pair of killer fists and a manager steeped in the wheeler-dealer, sleazy ways of the con-laced world of boxing can hit the jackpot in an instant—as in the case of Manny Pacquiao.

Pacquiao is now being handled by an American named Shelley Finkle for reasons only Pacquiao knows. We can only speculate why Pacquiao dropped his former manager, Rod Nazario, like a hot tong, the same way that Pacquiao dropped his discoverer, Polding Correa. As the respected Jimmy Cannon said, "Boxing is the red-light district of sports." In this game, nothing's impossible. Good men are perennially attracted to the game, like moths to flame. Con men congregate into the game to try to out-con one another.

Good man, con man, they drop everything and come together to watch a fight, not just a good fight but any fight. It is in boxing that suckers teem.

Thus, we can't wait to see Pacquiao fight again. With him in the ring, the hurts and horrors of a blighted nation take the back seat—even if only momentarily. Pacquiao has this aura, if not mantra, to lullaby us to dreamland, if not fantasyland, each time he climbs the ring. Everybody expects him to win even when ranged against the best of the lot, such as Erik Morales, so-called Mexico's El Terrible for his durability and seemingly invincible ways.

For a country so divided like ours, Manny Pacquiao has become, like FPJ in May of 2004, a unifier.

May God be with him on Sunday morning.

***

FASTBREAK. Due to insistent public demand, The Lettermen will perform an extra night on Jan. 27 at the Araneta Coliseum. "We were deluged with requests by fans who couldn't be accommodated on Jan. 28, thus the need to squeeze in one more show," said Luke Pasiliao of the organizing Solar Entertainment. Solar has really become that big as it is also the lead group in the airing of the Pacquiao-Morales fight on Jan. 22 through ABS-CBN. Dennis Uy comes to mind again as he is the cable/computer genius who pioneered in bringing to our living rooms the concept of the world-renowned pay-per-view each time a big boxing event comes along. Cheers to you, Dennis! Expect the jolly Ed Pamintuan to enjoy every minute of the Pacquiao fight at your Savers this Sunday.

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

RTU tracksters trample rivals

RIZAL TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY (RTU) FLEXED its muscles in athletics, hauling all but two of the 17 gold medals at stake in the opening day of the 18th State Colleges and Universities Athletic Association-National Capital Region (Scuaa-NCR) track and field competitions Monday at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex. The 15-gold haul, coupled by 7 silvers and 7 bronzes, virtually assured RTU of a successful title defense in the sport and boosted its bid for the overall title. Ranillo Jarabejo, Jasmine Chavez, and Merily Teodosio led the Mandaluyong-based tracksters, combining for five gold medals. Jarabejo ruled the men's high jump and long jump and took part in the 4x100-m relay.

SUBIC TRIATHLON BACKER: Preparations for the 12th staging of the Subic Bay International Triathlon on May 7 have started following the signing of a sponsorship agreement between the Triathlon Association of the Philippines and title sponsor Legenda Hotel recently. From left, TRAP secretary general Mon Marchan, TRAP president Tom Carrasco Jr., Legenda CEO Khoo Boo Boon, and institutional marketing manager Cheryl Singzon.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTRAL OFFICE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

☐ Department of Health Bldg 6
San Lazaro Compound Sta Cruz Manila
☎ (632) 743-83-01 Local 1627/1650/1651

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTANT SERVICES)

Philippines
Second Women's Health and Safe Motherhood Project
Project Loan No. 7290-PH

The Government of the Philippines has applied a Loan to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this Loan to payments under the following contracts:

No.	Project	Firm's Qualification
IFB-CS-FAP-2005-18	Business Model for Women's Health and Safe Motherhood Facilities	The interested consulting firm must have adequate number of skilled personnel, basically composed by the following: (1) Business Planning Specialist, (2) Organizational Development Specialist/Training Specialist.
IFB-CS-FAP-2005-19	Communication and Advocacy Strategy to Effect Positive Behavior Change	A full service professional advertising agency experienced in large-scale socially oriented communication projects in the Philippine context. The team should basically be composed of the following: (1) Team Leader (2) Community Development Specialist (3) Communication Specialist (4) Researcher

The Department of Health now invites eligible consulting firms to express interest in providing the services for the above-mentioned projects. The consultant must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (i.e. brochures, description of similar assignments undertaken, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills of key staff, job capacity of the firm, and other information that could establish the firm's qualification).

A consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers dated May 2004 (the Consultant Guidelines).

Expressions of interest and all requested information from the consultants must be delivered to the address below by no later than 2 February 2006.

ALEXANDER A. PADILLA
Chairperson
Central Office Bids and Awards Committee
1/F Building 6, San Lazaro Compound, Sta. Cruz, Manila
Tel #: 7438301 loc 1601, 1650, 1651, 1302, 1304, 1326
Telefax No.: 7116265
Email: whsm@doh.gov.ph

Interested consultants may download eligibility and shortlisting requirements including prescribed formats to be used from the DOH Website www.doh.gov.ph. Further information may be obtained til the afore-given address during office hours

(Sgd.) ALEXANDER A. PADILLA
Undersecretary
Chairperson, Central Office Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI—Jan 12 & 19, 2006)

SPORTSWATCH

Checkmate new venues

ST. Francis Square (SFS) in Mandaluyong City and St. Andrews School (SAS) in Parañaque City are the newest venues for the Milo Checkmate Saturday- and Sunday-only clinics in Metro Manila. The chess clinics at SFS will start on Jan. 28 and will be held from 2-5 p.m. on the second floor lower level B. The classes at SAS will be conducted during Saturdays only at Grade 1 St. Gabriel room from 2-5 p.m. Register at the venue or call 826-8560 and 0916-852-1069.

World Slasher leaders

FORMER World Slasher Cup champions Dicky Lim and Rey Briones headed perfect two-win scorers Tuesday at the start of the 2006 WSC Invitational 8-cock derby at the Araneta Coliseum. Lim's Winslet 1 and 2 and Briones' Wild and Spartan were tied for the early lead with Bong Revilla's Exodus 1 and 2, Alving Ong's Mighty Wings, Lawrence Wacnang's Crowsland, Peping Cojuangco's Cat Stinger, Butch Macasaet's Greenwood, Tony Lim's Lucban, Nene Abello's Black Water, Joey and Buboy delos Santos' San Roque, Ric de Guzman's Manaoag, Philip Chiongbian's King Cobra, Mike Romulo's Mica and Tonio and Cito Alberto's Rainbow Warriors, American Joe Stanfield's Feather River, Siegfrey Linsangan's Dada Guam, Georgian Roger Roberts' Hatchet-TBird 11 and Georgian Johnny Phillips JP T-Bird IV.

Cardona hosts derby

CARDONA Cockpit, in celebration of Cardona Town Fiesta 2006, will present the Annual 4-Cock Fiesta Derby on Feb. 3 in cooperation with Thunderbird Platinum. Up for grabs is P300,000 with the entry fee and minimum bet set at P6,600 and P5,500. The derby will start at 7 p.m. For cockhouse reservation call 0917-8516527. Also set is the Jess Beltran & Friends 3-Cock Derby at the New Tarlac Coliseum on Jan. 28.

Pucay, Balan forge tie for halfway lead

By Musong R. Castillo

MARS PUCAY AND OBSCURE DRIVING range pro Anthony Balan turned in level par-72s yesterday to forge a tie for the lead halfway through the P750,000 Omega Cup at Wack Wack East.

Pucay got the benefit of an early tee time and benign playing conditions while Balan needed an eagle to catch the former caddy from Baguio with 145 totals.

They posted a two-stroke lead over Carito Villaroman and Randy Garalde, who were a shot ahead of a four-man group that included first round leaders Robert Pactolerin and Gerard Cantada.

Villaroman, the former Junior World champion, turned in 70 for 147 and a tie with Garalde, who shot a 74.

Pactolerin, who fired a brilliant 69 Tuesday, found himself playing out of the trees almost the entire round and limped home with a 79 for 148 like Cantada, who did a little better by carding a 77 that went with his first-round 71.

ERNIE SARMIENTO

PUCAY benefits from early tee time.

"That's golf, sometimes you hit it straight all day and sometimes you don't," said Pactolerin, the 1990 Philippine Open champion, in Filipino. "There are still two rounds to go and I still like my chances."

Pactolerin did not have a birdie yesterday while three-putting four greens.

Senior pro Rey Alit submitted a second straight 75 and occupied solo ninth spot with his 150 aggregate even as Elmer Salvador assembled a 74 for 151 to round out the top 10 scores.

Richard Singuego made the biggest jump of the day, shooting a 69 after an atrocious 83 Tuesday to take a piece of 11th spot with Rey Pagunsan (72) and Ramil Bisera (75) at 152, seven shots off and with legitimate chances of winning.

A total of 39 players advanced to the final two days with 10 players tying at the cut line pegged at 159, including notables Cesar Ababa (78), Al Cruz (80), Raul Minoza (80) and Ruben Sasutil (79). Those who did not make it, including former RP Open winner Mario Manubay (80-162) and Eddie Bagtas (81-163) will play in the second part of the Pro-Am scheduled tomorrow.

The 35-year-old Balan, who gives lessons at the Kagitingan driving range, had a roller-coaster 38-34 round spiked by an eagle on the 585-yard fifth hole that was nullified by a double bogey on the 168-yard par-3 eighth hole.

Tagaytay joins NBC roster

TAGAYTAY IS THE NEWEST ADDITION to the National Basketball Conference (NBC) which starts its third season on March 10.

The entry of Tagaytay, to be called Batang Tagaytay, was sealed yesterday during a meeting between Mayor Bambol Tolentino and NBC secretary general Tito Palma and NBC North Division head Michelle Gaano.

Batang Tagaytay bought the franchise of last season's runner-up, Cavite Far Eastern Insurance, now a guest team in the PBL Heroes' Cup tournament.

Tolentino's team will be coached by Ramir Bayot and led by Joel Finuliar, McDonald Santos and Rey Ober.

The other players are Tito Reyes, Ian Pellejera, Gian Carlo Yabut, Eric Larica, Ian Bayot, Don Mordeno, Nelson Genido and Maurice Lascana.

A staunch anti-drug campaigner, Tolentino is also known as "chess godfather" and host to cycling and boxing events.

"I've been active in so many sports. Since basketball is the most popular in the country, I decided to join the NBC," said Mayor Tolentino.

NBC president and national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla, a batchmate of Mayor Tolentino at San Beda College, welcomed the entry of Tagaytay.

Tolentino has committed to host the fifth leg of the Nature's Spring-NBC preseason series starting on Feb. 15.

Gorres, Amonsot in top shape

LAS VEGAS—Z "THE DREAM" Gorres and Czar Amonsot both looked in top shape less than three weeks before they take on separate foes at the Orleans Casino here.

Gorres and Amonsot were met by promoter Sammy "Don King" Gello-ani and Rey 'Boom Boom' Bautista at the Los Angeles Airport here, and both indicated they have been preparing well and hard for their Feb. 3 bouts.

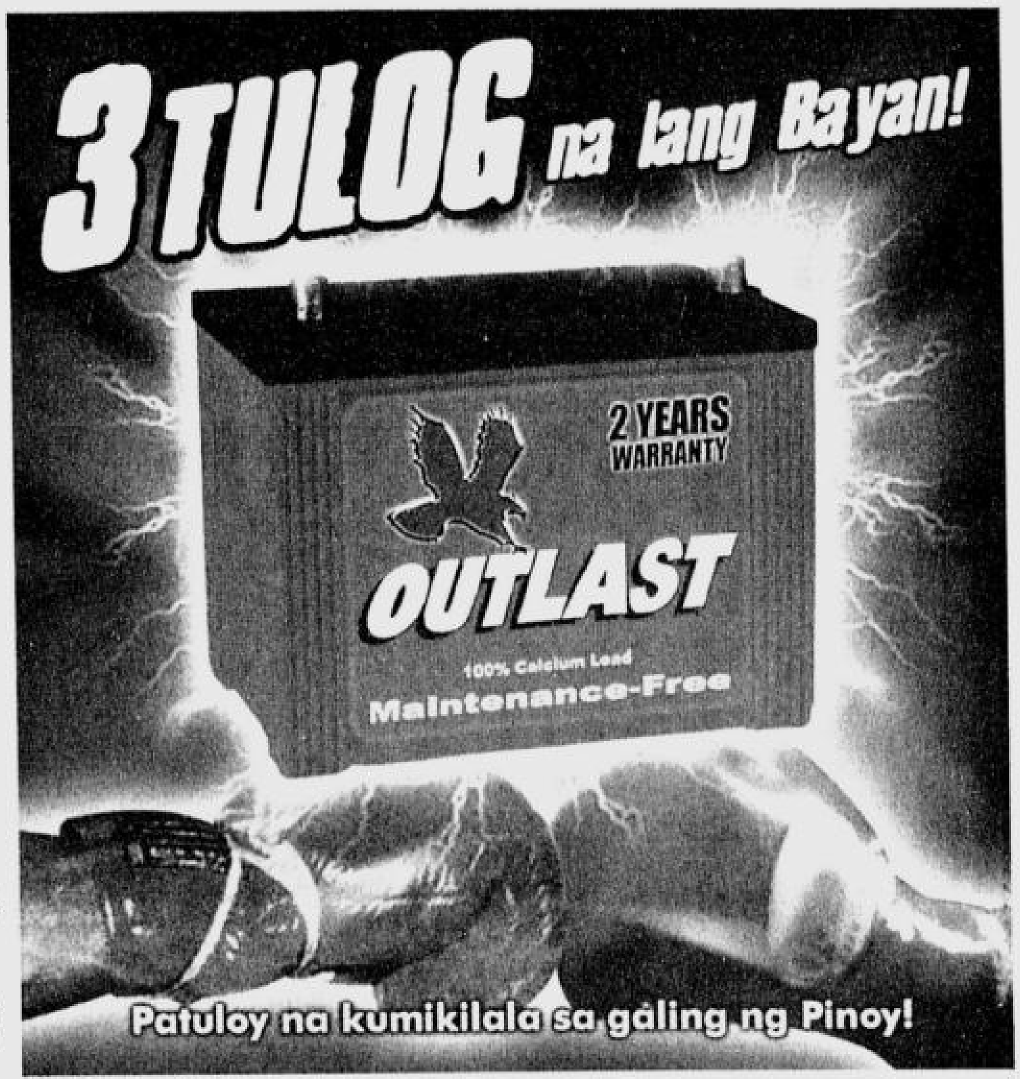
The duo were accompanied by business agent Michael Koncz and Filipino trainer Edito "Ala" Villamor.

Villamor, who has been overseeing the duo's preparation along with renowned trainer Freddie Roach, had confirmed to this writer that his wards have been whipping themselves into fine form, indicating they cannot afford to lose at this time of their careers.

Gorres (22-1-1, 12 KOs) is set to tangle with Jose Alfredo Tirado, while Amonsot (13-1-1, 10 KOs) will go up against Mexican Antonio Wong.

Tirado, managed by Erik Morales' father Jose, lost by technical decision to Filipino Diosdado Gabi last Sept. 23.

Wong, who holds an 11-5-1, 7 KOs record, hails from Tijuana, Mexico, but now lives in Las Vegas. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*



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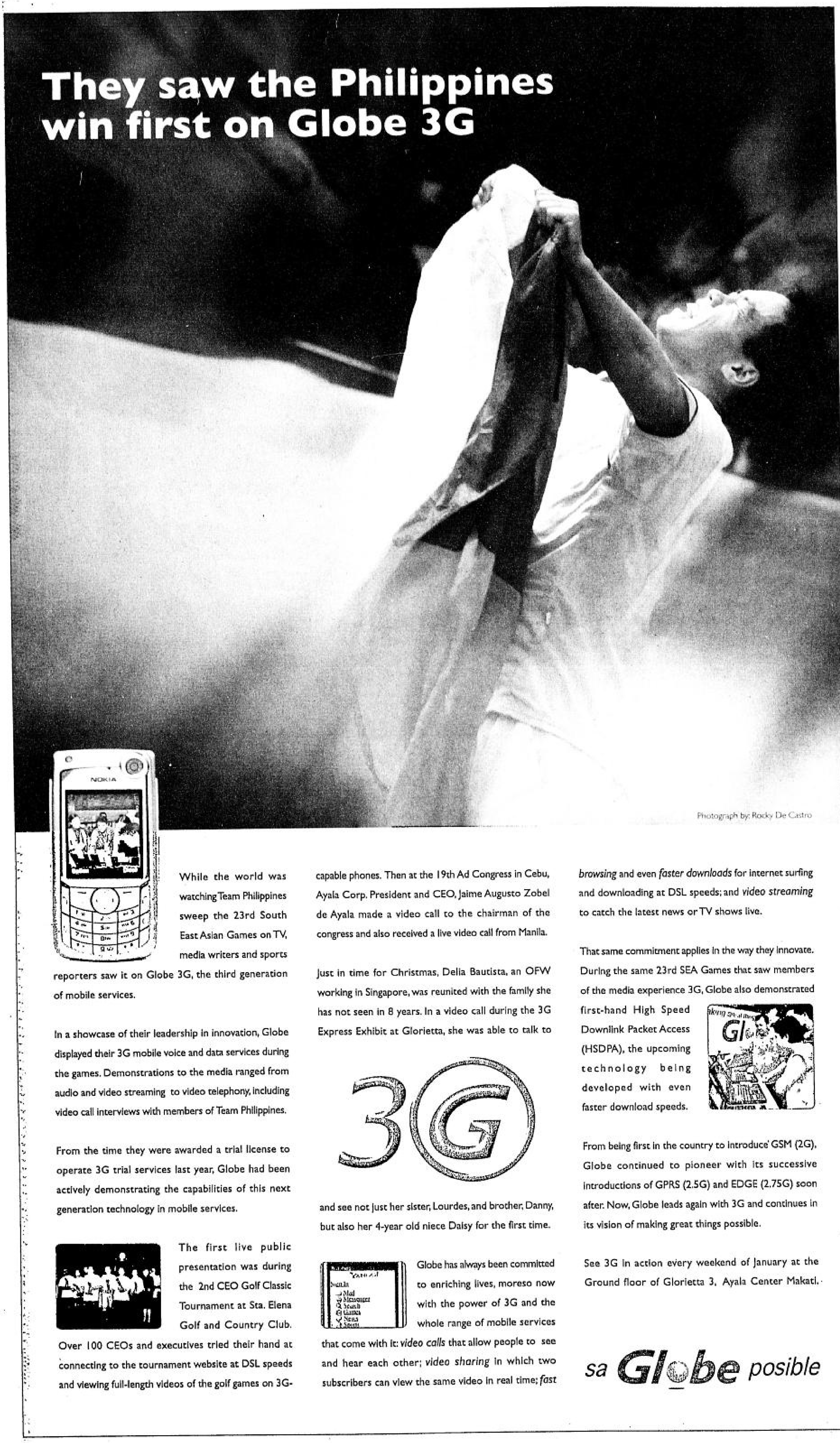

They saw the Philippines win first on Globe 3G
Photograph by: Rocky De Castro
3G
sa Globe posible

While the world was watching Team Philippines sweep the 23rd South East Asian Games on TV, media writers and sports reporters saw it on Globe 3G, the third generation of mobile services.

In a showcase of their leadership in innovation, Globe displayed their 3G mobile voice and data services during the games. Demonstrations to the media ranged from audio and video streaming to video telephony, including video call interviews with members of Team Philippines.

From the time they were awarded a trial license to operate 3G trial services last year, Globe had been actively demonstrating the capabilities of this next generation technology in mobile services.

The first live public presentation was during the 2nd CEO Golf Classic Tournament at Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club. Over 100 CEOs and executives tried their hand at connecting to the tournament website at DSL speeds and viewing full-length videos of the golf games on 3G-capable phones. Then at the 19th Ad Congress in Cebu, Ayala Corp. President and CEO, Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala made a video call to the chairman of the congress and also received a live video call from Manila.

Just in time for Christmas, Delia Bautista, an OFW working in Singapore, was reunited with the family she has not seen in 8 years. In a video call during the 3G Express Exhibit at Glorietta, she was able to talk to and see not just her sister, Lourdes, and brother, Danny, but also her 4-year old niece Daisy for the first time.

Globe has always been committed to enriching lives, moreso now with the power of 3G and the whole range of mobile services that come with it: *video calls* that allow people to see and hear each other; *video sharing* in which two subscribers can view the same video in real time; *fast browsing* and even *faster downloads* for internet surfing and downloading at DSL speeds; and *video streaming* to catch the latest news or TV shows live.

That same commitment applies in the way they innovate. During the same 23rd SEA Games that saw members of the media experience 3G, Globe also demonstrated first-hand High Speed Downlink Packet Access (HSDPA), the upcoming technology being developed with even faster download speeds.

From being first in the country to introduce' GSM (2G), Globe continued to pioneer with its successive introductions of GPRS (2.5G) and EDGE (2.75G) soon after. Now, Globe leads again with 3G and continues in its vision of making great things possible.

See 3G in action every weekend of January at the Ground floor of Glorietta 3, Ayala Center Makati.

RUSSIAN Maria Sharapova was one of those who stopped a strong American charge. AP

Roddick leads US advance

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—With Andy Roddick's personal cheering section leading the way, it was a red, white and blue day at the Australian Open.

Second-seeded Roddick shrugged off an ankle sprain and was nearly perfect in beating Wesley Moodie of South Africa, 7-5, 6-3, 6-2, in the second round.

Defending women's champion Serena Williams used her match against soft-hitting Camille Pin of France as a virtual practice session while extending her winning streak here to 16 matches with a 6-3, 6-1 victory.

Top-seeded Lindsay Davenport had to work a little harder to defeat Karolina Sprem of Croatia, 7-6 (4), 6-3.

Another American, 20th-seeded James Blake, rallied from a set down to bundle out gutsy French qualifier Jean-Christophe Faurel, 2-6, 6-1, 6-4, 6-3.

Robby Ginepri could have made it an even better day for the US contingent but fell to qualifier Denis Gremelmayr after winning the first two sets and leading 3-0 in the third.

Fourth-seeded Maria Sharapova overcame 31 unforced errors and fended off three set points for American qualifier Ashley Harkleroad in the second set to advance, 6-1, 7-5.

Roddick's cheering session included a group of young women who wore spangled red, blue and silver hats, had the letters of his name painted on their bare stomachs and chanted cheers.

"Would you believe me if I said every one of those is my cousin?" Roddick joked afterward. "It's nice when you have 30-some-odd girls in bikinis cheering for you." *AP*

Kirilenko shines as Jazz triumph

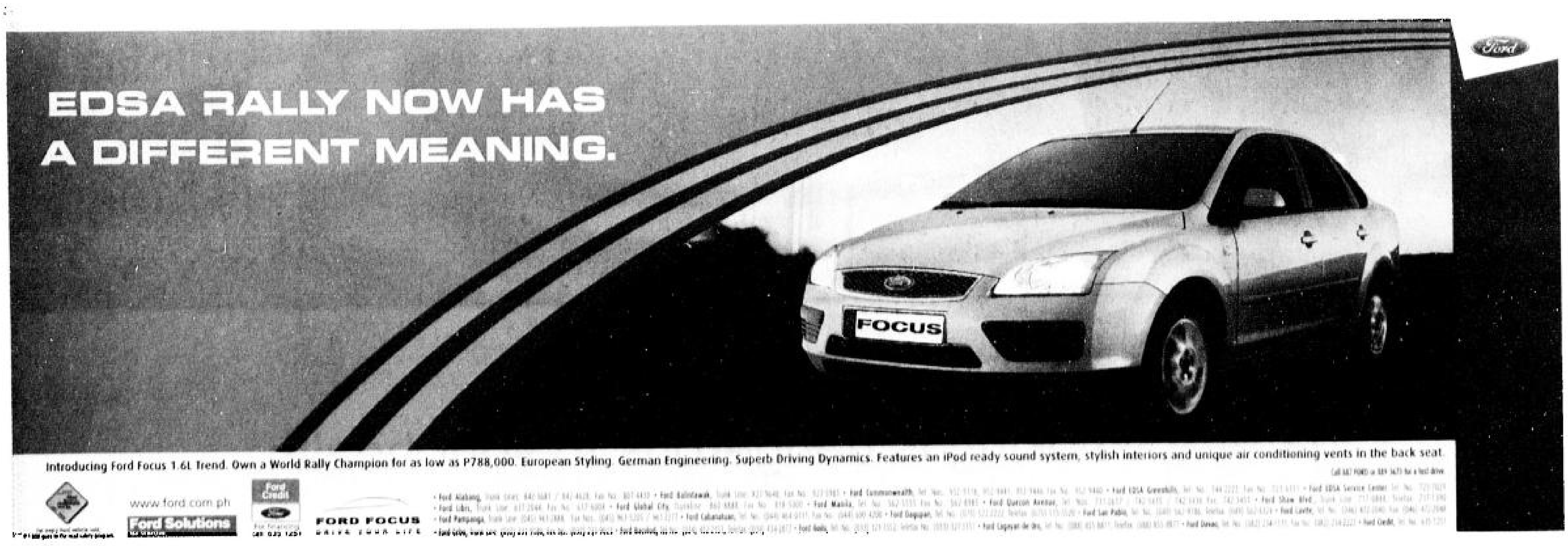
SALT LAKE CITY—ANDREI KIRILENKO HAD his first career triple-double and Mehmet Okur chipped in with game high 29 points to power the Utah Jazz to a 111-98 win over the Toronto Raptors on Tuesday.

Kirilenko's 18 points, 16 rebounds and 11 assists was also the first triple-double for Utah since Karl Malone completed the feat against the Los Angeles Clippers on May 4, 1999.

The big Russian's 16 rebounds and 10 assists also represented career highs.

In Sacramento, Kevin Martin poured in a career high 25 points and Kenny Thomas contributed 22 points and 15 rebounds as the Kings handed the Phoenix Suns their heaviest defeat of the season, 119-90. *Reuters*

NBA on Solar Sports: 9:30 a.m.—Dallas vs Houston (replay at 9 p.m.)



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Thank you, in so many words

Or how Golden Globe winners expressed their happiness

- Joaquin Phoenix, Best Actor in a Movie Musical or Comedy, "Walk the Line" (Johnny Cash biopic), poking fun at his dark and brooding image: "Who would ever have thought that I would win in the comedy or musical category?"
- Reese Witherspoon, Best Actress in a Movie Musical or Comedy, "Walk the Line":

"This film is really important to me. It's about where I grew up. It's about the music I grew up listening to."

- Ang Lee, Best Director, "Brokeback Mountain": "This has been an amazing year for Ameriican cinema. I just want to give my first thanks to my fellow filmmakers for strengthening my faith in movies."
- Rachel Weisz, Best Supporting Actress, "The Constant Gardener": "I share this with Ralph Fiennes (her co-star). One couldn't ask for a more magical, a more committed actor."
- Larry McMurtry, Best Screenplay, "Brokeback Mountain": "I thank my typewriter, a Hermes 3000, surely one of the noblest instruments of European genius."
- Geena Davis, Best Actress in a (TV) Drama Series, "Commander in Chief": "This is really wonderful for a fledgling little show."
- Felicity Huffman, Best Dramatic Actress, "Transamerica": "I know as actors our job is usually to shed our skins, but I think as people our job is to become who we really are, and so I would like to salute the men and women who brave ostracism, alienation and a life lived on the margins to become who they really are.
- Mary-Louise Parker, Best Actress in a (TV) Comedy Series, "Weeds," winning over four "Desperate Housewives" nominees: "I thought we were all kind of desperate housewives. Mine was just a little more desperate than they were."
- S. Epatha Merkerson, Best Actress in a TV Movie, "Lackawana Blues": "I'm 53 [but] I feel like I'm 16. And if I weren't in the middle of a hot flash, I'd believe that."

REESE Witherspoon (right) pays tribute to her country roots while Joaquin Phoenix is incredulous that he won in the "musical-comedy" derby.

HFPA/63RD GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS

Actress with 'deadly' charms

DOLLY WOOD

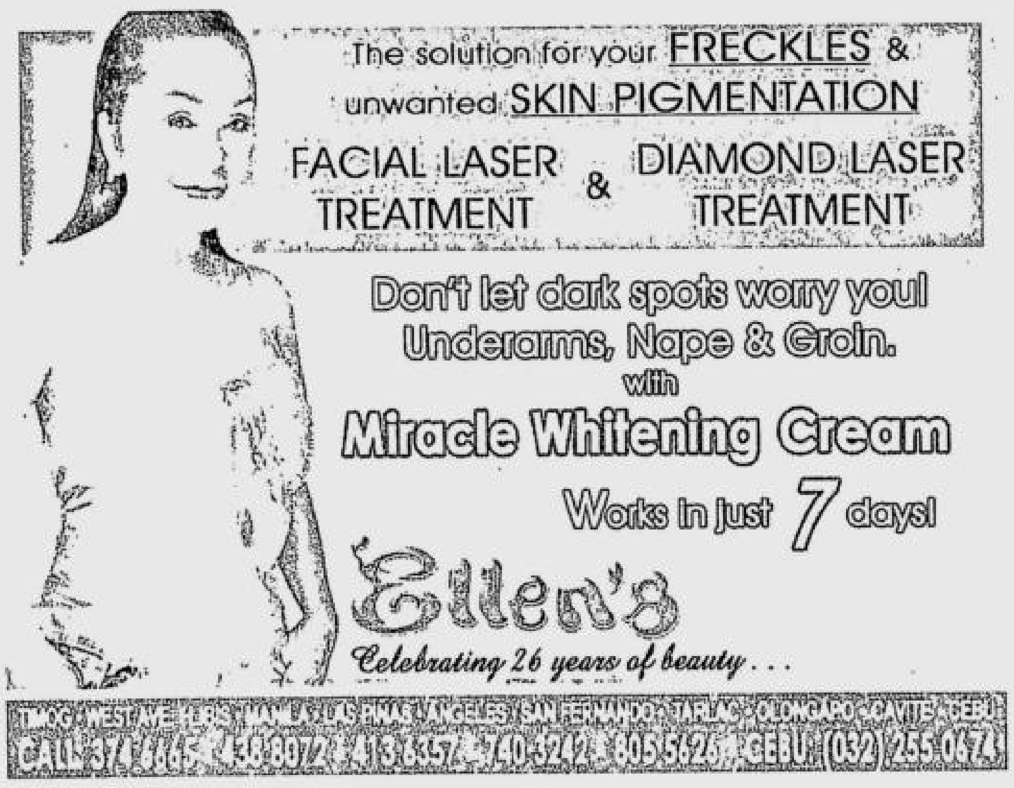
Dolly Ann Carvajal

IN MY PREVIOUS column I wrote about the lesbian assistant director who committed suicide due to inconsolable grief after her young actress paramour dumped her. It's quite uncanny that the same young actress was the cause of another young actress' failed suicide attempt not too long ago. The second young actress got heartbroken when her boyfriend was paired off with young actress Number 1. Hmm ... is she really such a femme fatale? Hopefully there won't be a third suicide. Do these things also come in 3's or, as the French say, "Jamais deux sans trois?"

I got a frantic call from Becky Aguila (manager of Jennylyn Mercado and Angel Locsin). She wanted to clarify the item I earlier wrote about her allegedly spreading rumors that Marianne Rivera (Mark Herras' girlfriend) already has a kid. She lamented, "Even when Jen and Mark were still on, I didn't meddle in their romance. It has never been my practice to interfere with the personal lives of my artists, much less talk ill of another artist like Marianne, whom I don't know personally. Besides I've too many other problems to worry about the love life of my wards."

What about her problem with Angel Locsin? She refused to comment but

ACTRESS/ A2-4



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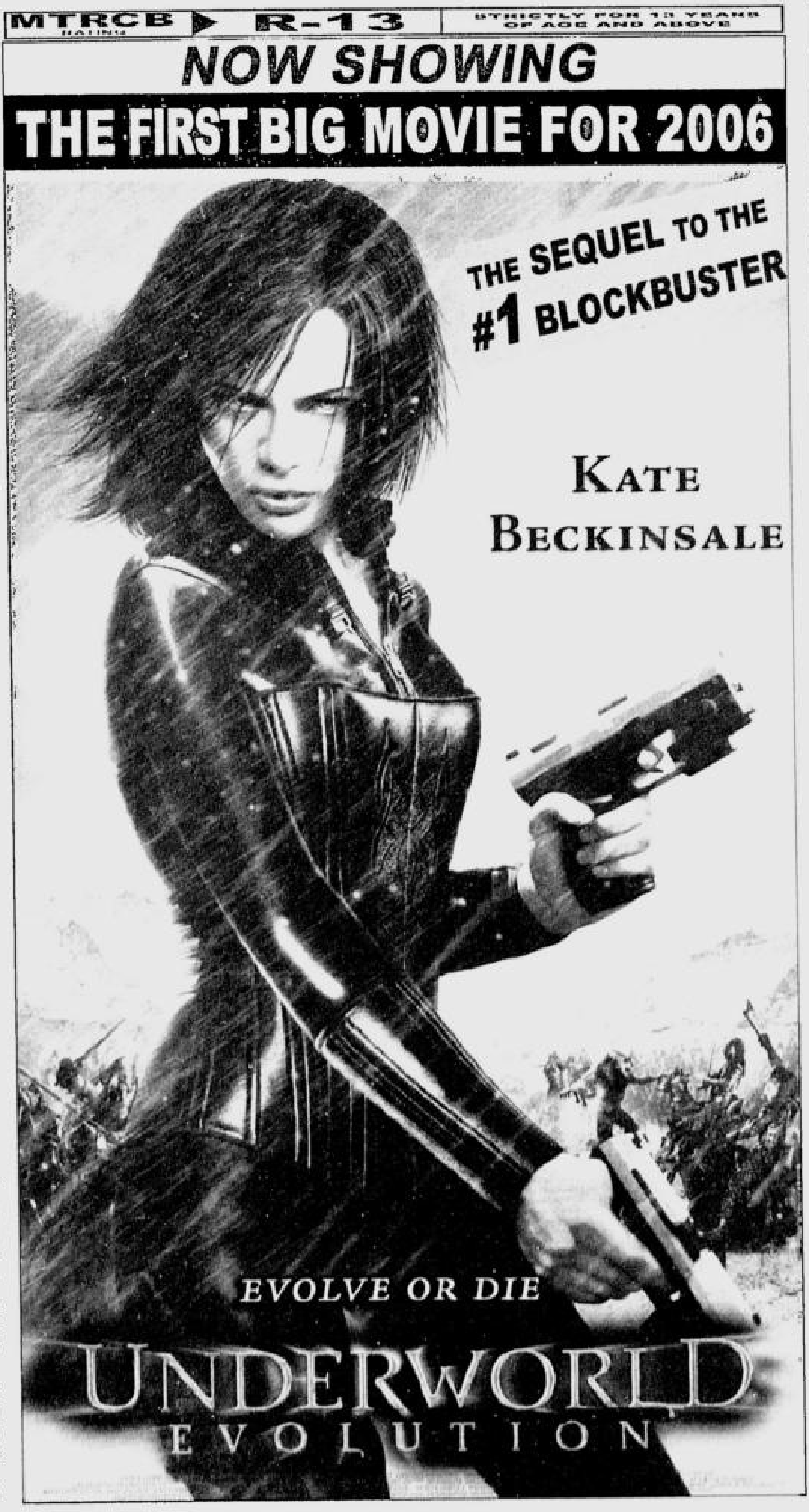

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Studied in 6 cooking schools in Hongkong

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Graduate : Full Course, Thai Cooking School at the Oriental Hotel, Bangkok
Studied cooking in Europe, South America & Hongkong
Co-founder, Reynoso Cooking and Baking School, March, 1963

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JAN 23 MON - 2:30 - 6:00PM - 7 FINGER PARTY FOOD W/ COCKTAIL PUNCH. CRUNCHY W/ NUTS COATED CHICKEN LOLLIPOPS W/ TARTARE SAUCE, BEEF TERIYAKI KEBABS(BBQ)W/ GARLIC YOGURT, CRISPY STUFFED SHRIMPS DEBONED AND STUFFED CHICKEN WINGS, CHEESE CUSTARD TARTS(QUICHELORRAINE); CHICKEN POPSICLES W/ BROWN MUSHROOM GRAVY, TUNA IN EGG POUCHES (HOMEMADE CREPES), BUCO PINEAPPLE RHUM PUNCH
P1,800. BY ERNEST
JAN 24 TUE - 2:30 - 6:00PM - GRILLING, SIZZLING, FRYING! BEST SELLERS! SISIG-CAPAMPANGAN. SIZZLING TADYANG NG BAKA, NEW BONELESS, MAGNOLIA CHICKEN FILLET BBQ ON STICKS, KWEK-KWEK (COATED QUAIL EGGS ON A STICKS WITH SWEET AND SOUR SAUCE' CRISPY BUCHI ASADO PAO
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JAN 25 WED. - 2:30 - 6:00PM OPEN A PIZZA PARLOR: LEARN TO MAKE THESE ITALIAN FAVORITES MOZARELLA-TOPPED BIG & THICK CRUST PIZZA (BAKED IN A RECTANGULAR PAN) THIN CRUST PIZZA WITH DIFFERENT TOPPINGS, FETTUCINE ALFREDO, SPAGHETTI CARBONARA, BREADED VEAL STEAKS WITH LEMON PEACHED-FILLED CREPES WITH FRUIT SAUCE PLUS 12 BONUS RECIPES OF PASTAS & SANDWICHES
P1,800. BY ERNEST
JAN 26 THU 2:30 - 6:00PM - VERY SPECIAL WELL LOVED PILIPINO DISHES AND SWEETS 1!
SUPER SARAP NA PANCIT MOLO, KARE-KARE NI ACHING LENI, MECHADO, GUINATANG MAIS, GUIA'S ILOILO RICE PUTO CRISPY KANGKONG WITH 3 DIPS, UKOY ESPESYAL P1,800. BY SYLVIA
JAN 27 FRI 2:30 - 6:15PM - LIGHT & AIRY ENSAYMADAS! CHEESE-ROLLS SPECIAL EGG PANDESAL' PANDESAL WITH FILLING CINNAMON ROLLS, BREAD BAKING MADE EASY!
P1,800. BY SYLVIA
JAN 28 SAT 2:30 - 6:00PM - MAX'S STYLE FRIED CHICKEN. JOLLIBEE STYLE CHICKEN WITH GRAVY; CHICKEN BURGER; DELICIOUS POTATO SALAD, SIZZLING GRILLED PORK CHOPS; FOUR SEASONS PUNCH RIPE MANGO, MELON TAPIOCA WITH SAGO, GREEN MANGO JUICE.
P1,800. BY ERNEST
JAN 30 MON 2:30 - 6:00PM MERIENDA FARE; DELICIOUS PANCIT PALABOK!
LUMPIANG UBOD WITH HOMEMADE EGG WRAPPER, FRIED WANTON WITH SWEET AND SOUR SAUCE, MAGNOLIA HOMEMADE UBE WRAPPER FOR LUMPIA, FRIED LUMPIANG SHANGHAI, MINT FRUITCAKE BARS, SARAP BAKED COCOROONS
P1,800. BY SYLVIA
JAN 31 TUE; FEB 2 THU; FEB 7 TUE; FEB 9 THU; 9:00AM - 5:00PM
2006 FONDANT & GUMPASTE FLOWERS COURSE 1 - COLETTE PETERS STYLE. 4 LESSONS. P6,000 INCLUDING INGREDIENTS, LUNCH, SNACK EXCEPT DECORATING MATERIALS (AVAILABLE FOR SALE AT CULINARY STUDIO OR BRING YOUR OWN) PLS. BRING STYRO, BOX, SCISSORS, PAINT BRUSHES & CUTTERS IN EVERY LESSON. BY LENI
DAY 1: (1) HOW TO MIX GUM PASTE, TINT, ROLL-OUT, CUT LEAVES & FLOWERS SUCH AS DAFFODILS, TULIPS, LILLYS, CALLA LILLY, EASTER LILLY, DAISY, CARNATION, STEPHANOTIS, WILTON ROSE AND OTHER PETAL FLOWERS, POINSETTIA, CRYSANTHEMUM. (2) HOW TO USE CHALK & AIRBRUSHING YOUR FLOWERS, MAKE PATTERNS, TRANSFER PATTERNS, BRUSH EMBROIDERY, COLOR FLOWERS AND CUT-GLASS TECHNIQUE (FREE HAND GUMPASTE FLOWERS MOLDING) (3) LEARN RIBBON INSERTION, RUFFLING INLAID TECHNIQUE, USE OF CRIMPEES AND OTHER FONDANT TOOLS. CHOOSE AND/OR DESIGN DESIRED STYRO CAKE FOR WEDDING OR DEBUTANT CAKE TO BE MADE FOR LESSON 4 HOW TO COVER CAKE WITH FONDANT - INCLUDING HOW TO TINT, ROLL-OUT FONDANT.
(4) HOW TO PUT TOGETHER MULTILAYERED CAKES FOR WEDDING OR DEBUTANT, STYRO AND/OR REAL CAKES / EXECUTE YOUR CHOICE OF DESIGN
FEB 1 WED 2:30 - 5:30PM - EASY HONGKONG RESTAURANT COURSE! SIZZLING CHINESE STYLE STEAKS WITH MONTEREY BEEF TENDERLOIN, SHRIMP AND CRAB CLAWS AND BALLS IN NEST WITH SWEET AND SOUR SAUCE, HONGKONG STYLE ASSORTED VEGETABLE PLATTER, MAGNOLIA STIR FRIED CHICKEN BREAST WITH CASUY, LAPU-LAPU FILLET IN CREAM OF CORN SAUCE, LOURDES FAT CRABS COOKED IN GINGER - GARLIC SPRITE
P1,800. BY ERNEST
FEB 3 THURS. 2:30 - 6:00PM - POPULAR JAPANESE DISHES! LEARN 8 DELICIOUS RECIPES' SHABU-SHABU WITH 2 SAUCES, ASSORTED CRISPY TEMPURA, GRILLED PORK AND BEEF SLICE, UDON (VERY SPECIAL NOODLES) FRIED TOFUS IN SPECIAL SAUCE BREADED CHICKEN WINGS WITH VINEGAR SAUCE, JAPANESE MIXED FRIED RICE PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF COMPLETE SUSHI BAR
P1,800. BY SYLVIA
FEB 4 SAT; FEB 5 SUN; AND FEB 11 SUN; 9:00 AM - 5:00PM ADVANCE FONDANT WORKSHOP, COLETTE PETERS STYLE (CONSIDERED BY WILTON & LIFESTYLE CHANNEL AS THE WORLDS #1 CAKE DECORATOR. (COURSE ATTENDED BY LENI IN CHICAGO OCT-NOV, 2005) 3 LESSONS. P6,000, INCLUDES INGREDIENTS, LUNCH, SNACK (EXCEPT SCISSORS, CUTTERS, BOXES, CAKE PLATES, STYRO W/C YOU MUST BRING OR BUY IN CLASS). DAY 1: COLLETTE'S WORLD FAMOUS "CROOKED CAKE" & "PILLOW CAKE" AND STUDENTS HAVE A CHOICE TO MAKE EITHER OF THE TWO. ALL APPLICABLE CUT OUTS OR FLOWERS WILL BE PREPARED IN CLASS FOR THE DESIGN OF YOUR CHOICE. DAYS 2 & 3 : CONTINUE & FINISH YOUR CHOSEN DESIGN. NOTE: PREREQUISITE: ONE MUST HAVE A KNOWLEDGE OF WORKING & COVERING CAKES/STYRO W/ FONDANT TO ATTEND THE LATEST, EASIEST METHOD OF COLETTE PETERS TO BE TAUGHT BY LENI.
FEB 8 & 15 WED 2:00 - 5:00PM - LEARN TO MAKE BOTTLE & PRESERVE IN 2 LESSONS P1,800. MANGO JAM PINEAPPLE MANGO, APPLE SAUCE FOR ROAST TURKEY & PORKLOIN, FRESH ORANGE MARMALADE GUAVA JAM UBE STRAWBERRY, FRESH LEMON CURD MARMALADE BY LENI . IDEAL FOR HOMEBUSINESS.
FEB 10 FRI 1:00PM - FREE COOKING/BAKING DEMO BY ERNEST & SYLVIA; ROBINSONS, PIONEER, EDSA MANDALUYONG. FREE PANASONIC COOKBOOKS BY SYLVIA WILL BE GIVEN TO THE 1ST 200 ATTENDEES!
FEB 13 MON. 2:30 - 6:30PM - BAGUIO'S FAMOUS RAISIN BREAD. AMERICAN TASTY HONEY BREAD, BUTTER BREAD, BRAIDED CHEESE BREAD MORELLA & ERNEST BIG PANDESAL, SUPERSOFT CARMELITE BREAD IN A BUNDT PAN DELICIOUS BREAD MADE EASY P1,800. BY SYLVIA
FEB 14 TUE 2:30 - 6:00PM - 9 SPECIAL BARBECUE; BEEF TERIYAKI IN SKEWERS; PORK SPAREROBS WITH HOISIN SAUCE. MAGNOLIA CHICKEN DRUMSTICK IN HONEY SAUCE, SATE A JAM CHICKEN SKEWERS IN PEANUT SAUCE, BEEF RIBS WITH PEKING NOODLES, DELISCIOUS PORK SPARERIBS, NEW KOREAN BEEF BARBEQUE, NASIGORENG (INDONESIAN FRIED RICE) FERNANDO MIGUEL ERENETA CHICKEN HONEY THE BEST PORK BARBECUE SAUCE
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FEB 16 THU 2:30 - 6:15PM - LEARN THE SOFTEST SIOPAO DOUGH EVER! THE MOST DELICIOUS SIOMAI, KUA PAO (PEKING SIOPAO W/ MEAT FILLING & PICKLED MUSTASA) FISH HEAD SOUP, CAMARON RELLENADO, QUIKIAM W/ RADISH SALAD, STEAMED LAPU-LAPU P1,800. BY SYLVIA
FEB 17 FRI 2:30 - 6:00PM - ANG SARAP PANG NEGOSYO! 2 VERSIONS OF THE CHEWIEST CHOCO CRINKLES IN MANILA, GIANT MANGO MERINGUE WALNUT TORTE, CLASSIC AMERICAN APPLE PIE, FRENCH STREUSEL APPLE PIE
P1,800. BY MORELLA
FEB 18 SAT 2:30 - 6:00PM - MONEY-MAKING HOTEL AND BAKESHOP BEST-SELLERS! CHOCO LAVA CAKES (CHOCO CENTERS WILL OOZE OUT), "TARTUFO" (ITALIAN DOME CHOCOLATE COVERED ICE CREAM CAKE W/ CHOCO CAKE BASE CAN BE FROZEN FOR A MONTH OR LONGER), CREAM PUFFS W/ BAVARIAN & CHOCO FILLING W/ 2 GLAZES, THE YUMMIEST OF NEW YORK RESTAURANT SCHOOL CHEF INSTRUCTRESS LORRIE REYNOSO'S BAKED CHEESE CAKE P1,800. BY MORELLA
FEB 19 SUN 2:30 - 6:00PM - BEST SELLER OVEN BAKED CHICKEN PIES IN MUFFIN CUPS: FLAKY EMPANADA MELTS-IN-THE-MOUTH MAMON, MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER SLICES, PUTO PAO BONUS RECIPES OF MACAROONS, PUTO FLOUR UBE & TRI COLORED PUTO
P1,800. BY MORELLA
FEB 20 MON 2:30 - 6:00PM - 6 MONEY MAKINGPIES & CAKES. BY MORELLA. NO BAKE GRAHAM LAYERED MANGO ICE BOX CREAM CHEESE CAKE, LIGHT BANANA LOAF CRUNCH SLICES SOLD IN BAKESHOPS, OATMEAL BUTTER CRUST BLUEBERRY BARS, FRESH BUCO PIE, CLASSIC EGG PIE, BANANA CREAM PIE P1,800.
FEB 21 TUE 2:30 - 6:00PM - BUSINESS BAKESHOP BESTSELLERS! BIG, UNIFORM SIZED FROZEN UP TO 6 MONTHS SILVANAS (MINI SANS RIVAL); BRAZO DE MERCEDES; CLASSIC CHOCOLATE MOUSSE CAKE; MACAPUNO PANDAN CAKE W/ MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER ICING.
P1,800. BY MORELLA
FEB 22 WED 2:30 - 6:00PM - SOFTEST DOUGHNUTS FOR BUSINESS! NO OVEN NOR SPECIAL EQUIPMENT NEEDED INCLUDES CHOCOLATE & MARBLED DOUGHNUTS W/ SEVERAL FILLINGS, ICINGS, DIPS PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF THICK SPANISH CHOCOLATE & CHURROS P1,800. BY MORELLA
FEB 23 THU 2:30 - 6:00PM - MONEY MAKING FASTFOOD CART SPECIALTIES. BY MORELLA. DELICIOUS CORN DOGS WAFFLE W/ HOMEMADE CHOCOLATE/CARAMEL NACHOS "TOPOTOS" WITH MONTEREY MEAT FILLING AND CHEESE DIP HOMEMADE SHAWARMA WRAP W/ BEEF FILLING & CHEESE DIP P1,800.

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DNA test 'challenge' on TV

VIEWFINDER
Nestor U. Torre

SLOWLY BUT SURELY, THE NEW SECOND Avenue cable channel is establishing itself as a venue for alternative programming.

Some of its shows are exploitative turn-offs, like "The Jerry Springer Show." Others provide more varied viewing options, like **Ellen DeGeneres'** talk show and "Cold Turkey," a reality challenge that pressures its contestants to stop smoking.

One of the channel's most unusual offerings is **Maury Povich's** show.

On most days, it features stories about unique and courageous people.

Sometimes, however, it focuses on mothers of young children who are searching for their kids' real dads. Since most of their boyfriends don't want to own up, the show utilizes DNA tests to prove the reluctant dads' paternity.

What makes this search outlandish is the fact that each woman serially tries to sic the "DNA cops" on so many boyfriends. The record holder has appeared on the program more than 30 times—with a different protesting man in tow.

To date, each of those men has been proven to not be the father of the floridly promiscuous woman's child. And, each time the negative DNA finding is announced, the woman screams, runs away in anger and embarrassment, and is followed by TV cameras backstage, where she collapses on the carpeted floor and loudly cries herself a flooded river of crocodile tears.

We say "crocodile," because some days later, there the woman is again, back on the show with her latest grumbling ex-boyfriend in tow—and she goes through the same sordid (and by now boring) circus all over again, for the umpteenth time.

The "DNA test" feature is both shocking and sad to watch, because the women who appear on the show behave like shrews.

There's no love lost between them and their former lovers. They keep screaming epithets and generally treating each other like dirt. They are supposed to be good parents to their children?

No way.

While we credit Povich's show for helping women look for their children's fathers, its repetitive DNA test and its guests' ugly behavior leave a bad taste in the mouth.

We also end up feeling that the show is exploiting the feelings of the women and men it features.

And perhaps the most pathetic victims of all are the fatherless children, whose longing for their dads has been turned into a spectacle and spectator sport on TV.

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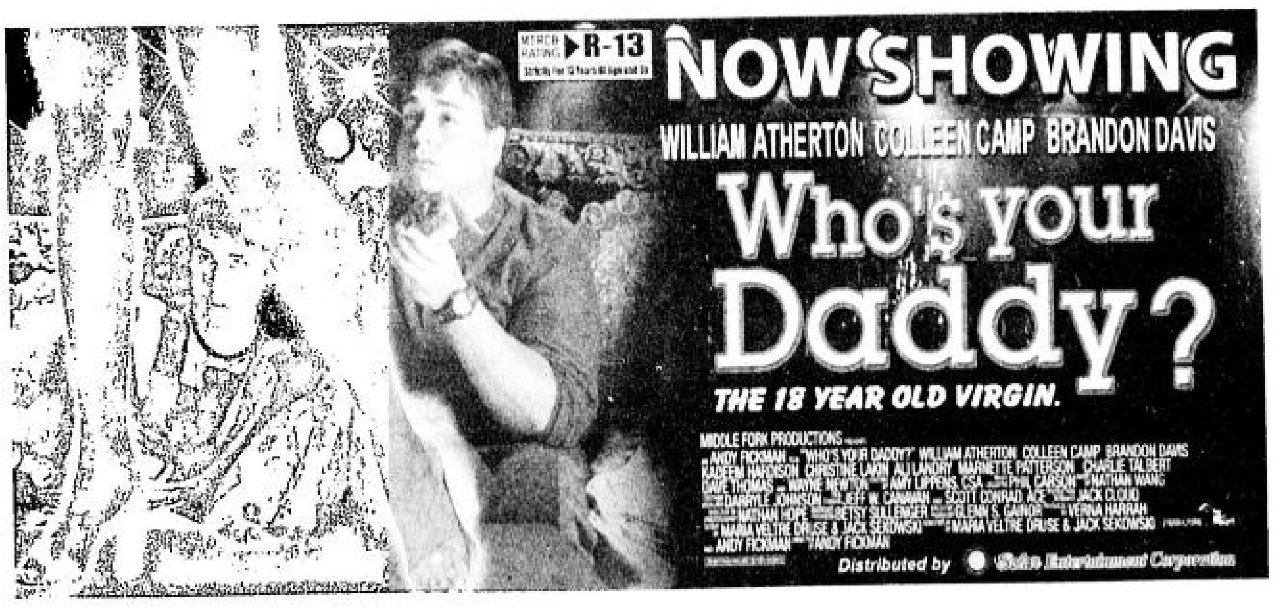
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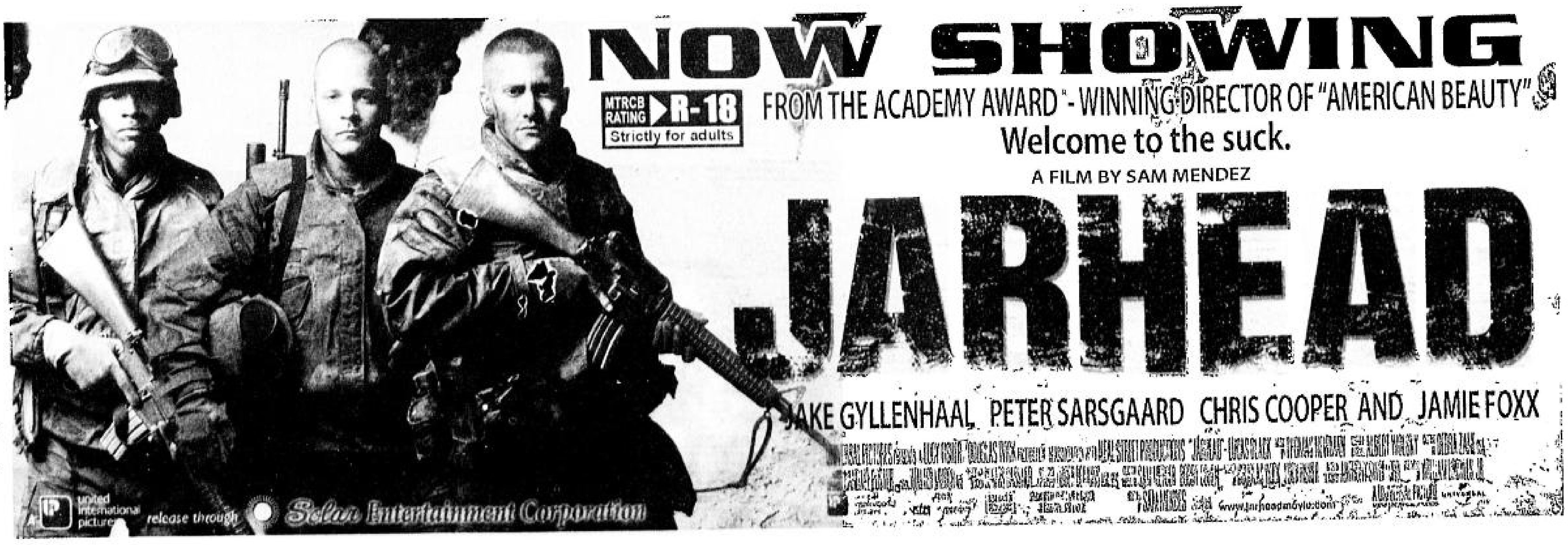
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3 LITTLE MANHATTAN
4 RUMOR HAS IT
5 JARHEAD
6 The Chronicles of NARNIA
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AKO LEGAL WIFE
8 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
9 THE FAMILY STONE
10 KING KONG

ERMITA 638-7809 to 12

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 JARHEAD
4 LITTLE MANHATTAN
5 The Chronicles OF NARNIA
6 RUMOR HAS IT
7 KING KONG
SAINT ANGE

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1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 RUMOR HAS IT
5 JARHEAD
6 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
7 BLUE MOON
8 KING KONG

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 KING KONG
3 JARHEAD
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
6 UNDERWORLD 2

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3 RESERVE
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6 The Chronicles of NARNIA

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G1 GLORIETTA 1	THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	RUMOR HAS IT	DON'T GIVE UP ON US			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	RUMORS HAS IT	DON'T GIVE UP ON US	THX THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GUARANTEED SEATS	THE FAMILY STONE	JARHEAD	UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	LITTLE MANHATTAN
GB1 GREENBELT 1	RUMORS HAS IT	UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	THX THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GUARANTEED SEATS	THX UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION GUARANTEED SEATS	JARHEAD GUARANTEED SEATS	LITTLE MANHATTAN GUARANTEED SEATS	RUMOR HAS IT GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	RUMOR HAS IT	JARHEAD	LITTLE MANHATTAN		
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Actress with 'deadly' charms

From page A2-1

someone close to her told me that someone is already mediating so that Becky and Angel can settle their differences once and for all. And so it goes ... behind every blessed artist is a stressed manager. Stressed for success!

Jake Cuenca is said to be one of Jennylyn Mercado's ardent suitors. There's no more bitterness left in her heart after she split up with Mark Herras. Now the ex-lovers gamely joke around when they're together. No more *deadmahan*. Jen is in no hurry to fall in love again and she's keeping her doors open. I wonder if Jake will blow his chances of winning Jen's heart if she finds out that he was spotted in Prince of Jaipur getting cozy with a ravishing date. Or is he out to have one girlfriend for show biz purposes and an official one off-cam? That's not totally unheard of among most young actors these days, huh?

Kat de Castro 'sad'

I ASKED my good friend **Katherine de Castro** her sentiments about "Magandang Gabi Bayan's" folding up. She shared, " I feel sad but at the same time proud of MGB and my dad's (VP/Kabayan Noli) accomplishments. For almost 18 years, it ruled Philippine TV. No other show can match its credibility and sincerity. No one should question that. That's why I feel more sad for the MGB staff who never lacked compassion for every task they had to accomplish. I'm sure MGB will be sorely missed by many." Then she lightened up, "Oh well ... bilog ang mundo. MGB just needs to rest." And so do the wagging political tongues, right, Kat?

Brilliant Brillante

BRILLIANT filmmaker **Brillante Mendoza** is at it again. After reaping accolades here and abroad for his first digital film, "Masahista," which won in the 2005 Lucarno Filmfest in Switzerland, his next obra maestra ("Kaleldo") is going to hit theatres on March 8. It will have a premiere in Pampanga (where the entire film was shot) before its regular run. The movie got a B rating from the Cinema Evaluation board and a PG-13 from the MTRCB.

Direk B bears no grudges towards the Metro Manila Film Festival board who turned down "Kaleldo" for the festival lineup. Come to think of it, after the MMFF fiasco, it's better that Brillante's gem of a movie has been spared.

I had the privilege of watching a preview of "Kaleldo" (or "Summer" in Kapampangan). I was mesmerized by its rich texture, crisp story-telling and the superb acting of the entire cast.

The story is set in Guagua, Pampanga a decade after the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo which ravaged the province with lahar. It follows the lives of Rodolfo "Mang Rudy" Manansala (Johnny Delgado), a woodcarver, and his three daughters(Angel Aquino, Juliana Palermo and Cherrie Pie Picache) and their relationships with the people close to them-throughout seven summers.

It is told in three segments, each one told from the point of view of one daughter. Attached to every segment are social occasions popularly observed in the Philippines, with a symbolic motif for each, represented by the elements sun, fire, water, air, blood, moon and earth. As in Pinatubo's aftermath, the film shows that we can find beauty even among the ruins. It's not so much what you're looking at but what you see, after all of love and life's trials, that matter in the end. No doubt "Kaleldo" will live up to what it means and sizzle like the summer heat in the box office.

Tahanang Pinoy

FILIPINOS consider their home their sanctuary and refuge. Having these descriptions in mind, wouldn't it be nice if we pampered our homes a well? Taking good care of our house and making it look good doesn't mean that it has to be expensive all the time. This is where "Tahanang Pinoy" comes in. Hosts RJ Ledesma, real estate developer; Architect Gelo Mañosa; Aissa Gonzales, interior designer; and Chef Cristina lend their professional expertise to make every house a home sweet home. Catch Scribbleworks' award-winning show at 11 a.m. Sundays on ABC 5.

Catch HI-Esteem Productions "Ang Makulay na Daigdig ni Ter" starring Teri Onor and featuring Dennis Trillo, Alessandra de Rossi, Angel Locsin with Vivorah, Pola and the Raging Divas at Klownz comedy bar Quezon Ave on Jan 26. Kudos to my dear friend Peter Serrano for mounting the "fantashow."

(E-Mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com)

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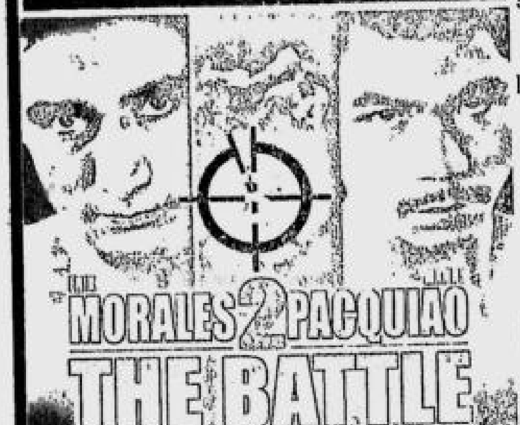

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08:25LFS/09:00LMF/10:40END
2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
11:50FS/12:20MF/03:10/06:00
08:20LFS/09:00LMF/11:20END
MEGAMALL
1 UNDERWORLD EVOLUTION
11:15FS/11:40MF/01:55/04:10/06:25
08:10LFS/08:40LMF/10:25END
CEBU (032) 231-3876
1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
11:00FS/11:10MF/01:45/04:20/06:56
09:15LFS/09:30LMF/11:50END
2 UNDERWORLD EVOLUTION
11:20FS/11:30MF/01:30/03:30/05:30/07:30
09:20LFS/09:30LMF/11:20END
3 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
11:35FS/11:50MF/02:15/04:40 07:05
09:05LFS/09:30LMF/11:30END

METRO MANILA
SM MEGAMALL
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 KING KONG
5 LITTLE MANHATTAN
6 NARNIA
7 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
8 AKO LEGAL WIFE
9 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
10 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
12 BLUE MOON

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 NARNIA
3 KING KONG
4 RUMOR HAS IT
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
6 AKO LEGAL WIFE
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
8 LITTLE MANHATTAN
9 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
10 BLUE MOON

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 NARNIA
4 KING KONG

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1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 NARNIA
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1 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
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8 NARNIA
9 RUMOR HAS IT
10 AKO LEGAL WIFE
11 BLUE MOON
12 LITTLE MANHATTAN

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1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 NARNIA
5 LITTLE MANHATTAN
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
8 KING KONG
9 ST. ANGE
10 RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 NARNIA

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 KING KONG
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 AKO LEGAL WIFE
5 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
6 LITTLE MANHATTAN
7 RUMOR HAS IT
8 NARNIA

SM CITY MANILA
1 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 KING KONG
4 NARNIA
5 LITTLE MANHATTAN
6 UNDERWORLD 2
7 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
8 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
9 UNDERWORLD 2
10 AKO LEGAL WIFE
11 BLUE MOON
12 ST. ANGE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 NARNIA
3 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
4 BLUE MOON
5 RUMOR HAS IT
6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

LUZON
SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 NARNIA
2 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
3 IN HER SHOES
4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
5 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 NARNIA
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 IN HER SHOES

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
1 NARNIA
2 ST. ANGE
3 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY BACOOR
1 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 NARNIA
4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
5 UNDERWORLD 2
6 PETA
7 BLUE MOON
8 KING KONG

SM CITY MARILAO
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
2 NARNIA
3 THE MAN
4 ST. ANGE

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 NARNIA
2 THE MAN
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 ST. ANGE

SM CITY LUCENA
1 NARNIA
2 THE MAN
3 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
4 THE MAN

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 NARNIA
4 THE MAN

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO
SM CITY CEBU
1 NARNIA
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
4 IN HER SHOES
5 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
6 KING KONG
7 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
8 NARNIA

SM CITY ILOILO
1 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
2 RESERVED
3 NARNIA
4 PRIME
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
6 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
7 RESERVED
8 IN HER SHOES

SM CITY DAVAO
1 NARNIA
2 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 IN HER SHOES
5 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
6 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 NARNIA
2 BLUE MOON
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

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1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30
GP
3 RUMOR HAS IT
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
PG-13
4 JARHEAD
12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:00
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CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GP 1:05,4:05,7:05,10:05
JARHEAD R18 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15
FAMILY STONE PG13 12:20,2:40,5:00, 7:20,9:40
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1 50 4 40 7 30 10 20
③ RUMOR HAS IT
MTRCB PG-13
12.00, 2:30, 5.00, 7:30, 10.00
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RUMOR HAS IT 12:10/2:30/4:50/7:10/9:30
FAMILY STONE 1:40/4:20/7:00/9:40
NARNIA
LITTLE MANHATTAN 12:50/3:00/5:10/7:20/9:30
BLUE MOON 2:00/4:30/7:00/9:30
JARHEAD 1:55/4:30/7:05/9:40
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UNANG TIKIM 12:10/2:10/4:10/6:10/8:10
UNDERWORLD 2 1:10/3:30/5:50/8:10
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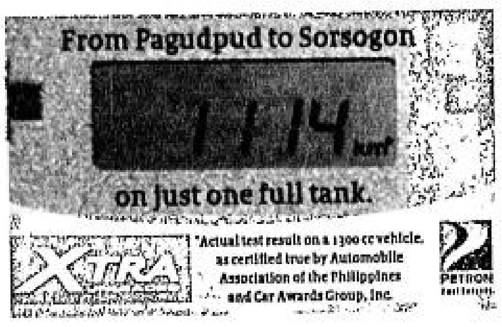

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BIR eyes new amnesty program

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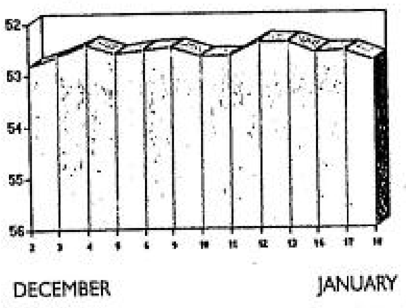

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P 52.765 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 18, 2006

¥ 115.24 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 18, 2006

GOLD: $546.30-546.80

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 18, 2006

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 1.34% lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.34 PERCENT LOWER YESTERday on across-the-board selling prompted by a fresh spike in oil prices and Wall Street's losses overnight, dealers said.

SHARES/ B2

Scheme to cover income tax liabilities

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE (BIR) IS considering another amnesty-type program catering solely to taxpayers with unpaid income tax liabilities.

Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said the revenue agency had been receiving requests from a number of taxpayers to come up with a program that would allow them to avoid audit and prosecution as long as they paid their tax deficiencies plus additional fees.

The plan to implement an amnesty for income tax delinquents followed the expiration of the Enhanced Voluntary Assessment Program (EVAP) last Jan. 2. The EVAP covered nearly all types of imposts such as the value-added tax, documentary stamp tax, estate tax, donor's tax, and capital gains tax.

Under the EVAP, applicants who had tax liabilities for taxable years 2004 and earlier were taken out of the BIR's priority list in tax auditing upon settling of the taxes due and the payment of charges. The tax payment should be at least 20 percent higher than the tax payment remitted the prior year to qualify for the EVAP.

The EVAP ran from October last year to Jan. 2 this year, but the BIR said it was not sure whether it generated the expected additional revenues from the measure. The BIR targeted to collect P2 billion in incremental revenues from the EVAP. Buñag said the actual collection figure would be available in the coming days.

Since the BIR has been getting requests for a similar program covering income taxes, the BIR said it found merit to study the proposal to raise additional revenues for the cash-strapped government.

Buñag had said that he preferred encouraging voluntary tax payments as a means to lessen revenue leaks than go through the expensive and time-consuming process of prosecuting tax evaders. Since Buñag's assumption of the top BIR post, the revenue agency has gone slow in the filing of tax evasion charges under the Run After Tax Evaders Program (RATE).

Under the RATE program, established during the time of former Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima and former Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr., the BIR and the Department of Finance filed tax evasion charges against high-profile individuals every week. The goal of the program was to inject the fear factor and therefore discourage the public from evading taxes.

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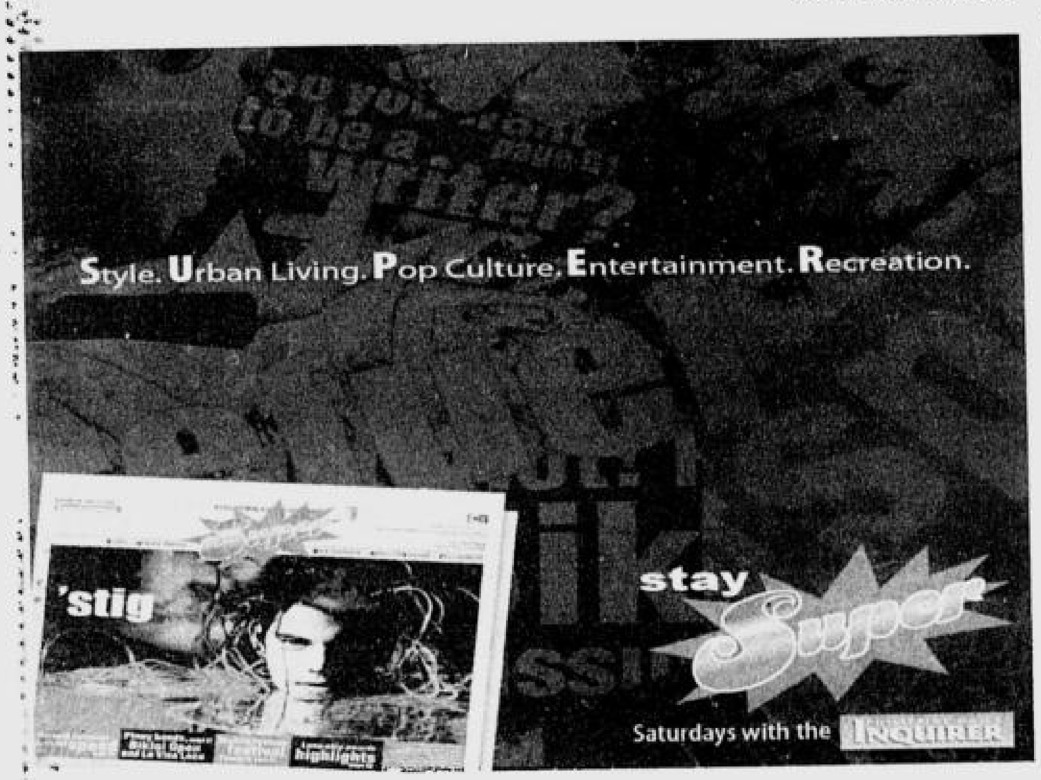

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Notice of Amendment of Invitation for Expression of Interest

to supply 200 MW new capacity of Visayan Electric Company, Inc. ("VECO")

In connection with the Invitation for Expression of Interest published in the following newspapers, *The Freeman* and *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (on 21 December 2005), *SunStar Cebu* (on 22 December 2005), and *The Philippine Star* (on 24 December 2005), the Visayan Electric Company, Inc. announces an amendment in its supply requirement from 100 MW to 200 MW.

In view of this amendment, notice is likewise given to all that the registration deadline has been extended to **15 February 2006**.

Interested parties are invited to submit a formal Expression of Interest to supply the electricity requirements of Visayan Electric Company, Inc. ("VECO") for the year 2009 to 2034. VECO's franchise covers the following areas: cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Talisay and the surrounding municipalities of Minglanilla, Naga, San Fernando, Consolacion and Liloan.

Interested parties' Expression of Interest should include a brief profile of their company and must be submitted to the address below. A registration fee of US$2,500.00 shall be charged upon registration. Once registered, interested parties will be given information updates and other documents relating to VECO's project.

Parties who have previously registered and paid the registration fee shall no longer be required to register.

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee
Visayan Electric Company, Inc.
J. Panis St., Banilad
Cebu City, Philippines
Tel. [6332] 230-8326
Fax: [6332] 231-7531
E-mail: bidchairman@veco.com.ph

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(PDI–Jan. 19, 2006)

S&P maintains 'stable' outlook for RP banks

By Doris C. Dumlao

AFTER ENDING 2005 on an upbeat note, the Philippine banking sector is seen off to a good start this new year despite lingering risks from a "weak" operating environment.

US-based rating agency Standard & Poor's yesterday maintained its "stable" outlook on local bank ratings following improvements in asset quality, while the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas cited fresh opportunities to do things even better this year.

In its latest banking report, S&P positively noted that the growth in Philippine banks' non-performing assets (NPAs) had not only been arrested but now reversed, while deposits, the system's main source of funding, remained fairly stable for the past three years.

But S&P warned that the industry's risk profile remained high, reflecting a "weak" operating environment.

"Although profitability improved in 2005, this was due mainly to trading gains from treasury activities, predominantly from the sale of high-yielding government securities," S&P said.

In the annual reception for the banking community hosted by the Monetary Board Tuesday night, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. noted the capital adequacy ratio of banks remained well the above international benchmark and the sector's non-performing loan ratio had dropped to a single-digit level.

Tetangco also cited the country's resilient economic growth, single-digit inflation rate despite runaway oil prices, sharp peso recovery, slowdown in interest rates, surge in foreign inflows from investments and remittances as well as the government's strong tax administration efforts.

"We are off to a good start in 2006. Of course you and I know we have a long way to go before we can truly say everything is A-OK," Tetangco said.

The BSP chief said it was critical for the BSP to keep an eye on the risks to inflation given continuing high oil prices while economic managers would have to preserve the momentum for economic reforms that would sustain growth in the long term.

Meanwhile, S&P noted that the banking industry remained fragmented despite incentives from the BSP to encourage consolidation.

"The existence of numerous small, financially weak and undercapitalized financial institutions undermines the sector's viability and growth prospects," S&P said.

The rating firm also lamented that banks continued to be dependent on trading gains, with their investment portfolio accounting for 31.7 percent of total assets in June 2005.

"The dependence reflects limited lending opportunities because many companies with good credit quality have minimal borrowing programs. The continued dependence on trading gains renders the banks' revenues more vulnerable to interest-rate volatility," S&P warned.

The rating firm added that capitalization remained weak despite improvements during the past two years.

"Although several banks have raised their Tier 2 capital, they are still unable to absorb the expected huge discounts resulting from asset disposals. Hence, the central bank has permitted the staggered recognition of loss provisions over 10 years," it explained.

GMA 7 sees modest profit growth for '06

By Clarissa S. Batino

GMA NETWORK INC. IS LOOKING AT A MODEST, but still double-digit, growth in profit this year in anticipation of increasing expenses related to the company's continuing expansion, its top official said.

"We will definitely earn more than P2 billion this year but the growth in profit will not be as large as in previous years," said GMA 7 president Felipe Gozon in an interview.

Last year, GMA 7 hit its P2-billion profit target, but did not exceed it. Still, the net income was 33 percent higher than the P1.5 billion in 2004. The network posted a profit growth of 42 percent in 2004.

Gozon said they could not commit to a 25-percent profit growth this year, noting that making a P2.5-billion net profit could be difficult.

"We are already coming from a high base so in terms of percentage growth, it will be lower this year," he said. "Also, we are incurring a lot of expenses that may not immediately generate revenue."

GMA 7 embarked on three major projects last year. These are the overseas expansion, the new programming for Channel 11 dubbed as Quality TV or QTV, and the improvement of GMA 7's presence in major provincial markets.

Gozon said GMA 7 would spend P1 billion this year for the three ongoing projects. Consequently, expenses related to overhead would increase because the new ventures entailed additional staff and new facilities.

Still, GMA 7 has eclipsed its fierce rival ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. in terms of profits and ratings in Mega Manila, home to the bulk of viewers and buyers.

The network's growing profitability puts it in a stronger position to do an initial public offering in the first half of the year. The plan is to sell 20 to 30 percent of the company and raise between P6 billion and P9 billion for the shareholders and the company.

Deutsche Bank and ATR Kim Eng are conducting a due diligence audit on the company to determine the current market value of GMA 7.

Gozon said the new audit could place the company's value at more than P30 billion, which was the previous valuation.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 18, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36.5	36.5	36	36	3,030,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57.5	57.5	56	56.5	2,240,500
China Banking Corp.	605	605	605	605	110
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	62.5	64.5	62.5	64.5	142,800
International Exch. Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	32,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32.5	32.5	31.5	32	1,643,900
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	65	65	65	65	100
Philippine National Bank	32	32	32	32	75,000
Phil. Savings Bank	35	35	35	35	9,100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14	14	13.75	13.75	7,000
Security Bank Corp.	37	37	37	37	164,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	32	32	31.5	31.5	68,600
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	100,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3115	3120	3115	3120	120
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	145	145	145	145	4,590
Ivantage Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.62	0.62	30,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	52	52	51	51.5	1,146,500
Manila Electric Co. B	21	21.25	20.75	21.25	308,400
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.5	2,048,000
Petron Corp.	5	5	4.85	4.9	4,467,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.94	0.94	0.93	0.93	1,430,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23	23	23	1,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	40.5	40.5	39	39	665,300
Pancake House Inc.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	13,000
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	90,000
Roxas Holdings, Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	120,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	64	63.5	64	53,700
San Miguel Corp. B	87.5	87.5	87	87.5	121,600
Tanduay Holdings, Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	60,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.25	18.25	18.25	18.25	1,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.36	0.37	0.35	0.37	5,500,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.04	1.04	0.99	0.99	4,706,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	10,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.45	4.55	4,786,000
CHEMICALS					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	12,000
Interphil Labs Inc. A	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	30,000
Pryce Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	950,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.075	0.07	0.075	800,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	30,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	135,000,000
Ayala Corp.	335	335	327.5	327.5	129,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	88,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.024	15,200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.26	2.26	2.22	2.24	1,659,000
APC Group Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.245	1,290,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	67,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.91	0.9	0.91	400,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	94,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1	2,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.12	1.12	7,975,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	988,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.22	1.26	1.22	1.26	286,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	230,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	4.2	4.2	4.15	4.15	1,325,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	100,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	4,730,000
Prime Media Holdings, Inc.	1.14	1.16	1.14	1.16	25,000
Solid Group Inc	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	60,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.135	0.135	6,960,000
SM Investments Corp.	239	239	238	239	273,570
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	3,000,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	460,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.25	2,614,400
Belle Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.08	1.08	6,768,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	44,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.18	0.18	1,100,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.34	1.34	1,884,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	440,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	630,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.22	0.24	0.22	0.24	1,010,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.5	0.52	0.49	0.5	32,070,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	100,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.73	290,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	2,254,000
Interport Res.	0.0034	0.0036	0.0034	0.0036	32,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	11,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	960,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	110,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.4	6,206,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	15,680,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6	6.1	5.9	5.9	141,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	30,000
SM Development Corp.	1.44	1.46	1.44	1.44	66,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.8	7,234,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.135	2,260,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	31,500
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.93	3,510,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	740	740	730	730	1,765,540
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.35	3.45	2,341,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1840	1840	1800	1805	61,760
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	3,400,000
Ionics Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	50,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	300,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.055	0.0575	0.0525	0.0525	20,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	2,000
Philweb Corp.	0.018	0.021	0.018	0.021	1,480,800,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	70,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.5	12	11.25	11.75	2,064,900
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	110,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.58	1.62	2,378,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	400,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	1,780,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.05	3.05	3	3.05	309,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	195,000
Paxys Inc.	7	7.1	6.8	6.9	2,665,000
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	22	34	20	34	95,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.24	1.24	1.18	1.18	2,619,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.68	5,586,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	3,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	413,000
Benguet Corp. A	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.3	10,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.58	1.64	1.58	1.64	64,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.235	0.235	0.225	0.23	2,360,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.29	15,040,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.018	0.017	0.018	252,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.028	0.026	0.027	389,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	42,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.48	1.48	1.4	1.44	6,902,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.24	2.24	2.12	2.18	18,926,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	25	25.5	25	25.5	51,200
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	450,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	280,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	10,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	132,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	10,500
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(PDR)	12	12	12	12	17,000
SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES					
Cashrounds Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	1,000

Shares close . . .

From page B1

Massive losses in Tokyo generally unsettled the region, with investors there anxious about a probe into Internet company Livedoor.

The composite index gave up 28.85 points to 2,125.45 after trading between 2,117.61 and 2,154.30. Turnover was 2.68 billion shares worth P2.34 billion, about a third of which were sold in cross transactions.

The all-shares index fell 19.28 points to 999.76.

Losers led gainers 57 to 21, with 52 stocks unchanged.

Dealers said the escape from military prison overnight Tuesday of four officers on trial for a failed 2003 military mutiny also unnerved investors.

"We've moved alongside other markets in Asia, which have turned negative as they tracked Wall Street's weakness overnight," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com. AFP

CURRENCIES

January 18, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.825900	1.000000	52.6150
Japan	Yen	0.007156	0.008664	0.4559
United Kingdom	Pound	1.460274	1.768100	93.0286
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106518	0.128972	6.7859
Switzerland	Franc	0.645235	0.781250	41.1055
Canada	Dollar	0.700597	0.859180	45.2058
Singapore	Dollar	0.505633	0.612220	32.2120
Australia	Dollar	0.620605	0.751428	39.5364
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.191298	2.653224	139.5994
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.220235	0.266660	14.0303
Brunei	Dollar	0.504000	0.610352	32.1137
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000088	0.000106	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.020777	0.025157	1.3236
UAE	Dirham	0.224870	0.272272	14.3256
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.210800	63.7062
Argentina	Peso	0.271901	0.329218	17.3218
Brazil	Real	0.360340	0.436300	22.9559
Denmark	Kroner	0.134044	0.162301	8.5395
India	Rupee	0.018673	0.022609	1.1896
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220358	0.266809	14.0382
Mexico	New Peso	0.077992	0.094433	4.9686
New Zealand	Dollar	0.569041	0.690084	36.3088
South Africa	Rand	0.136893	0.165750	8.7209
Korea	Won	0.000835	0.001011	0.0532
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025850	0.031299	1.6468

Away on a merger

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

WHY IS THE FIRST GENTLEMAN, MIGUEL Arroyo, now back for good in the Philippines after his short, Malacañang-imposed "exile" to the United States?

That is the the biggest mystery that people in business are talking about these days.

And as sure as s..t attracts flies, the poor Mike the Knife immediately drew talk about some big deals allegedly involving this cute administration of Gloriaetta.

There was the supposed Malacañang connection of a certain Chinese-Filipino businessman known as "BT," owner of a retail mall in Binondo.

Our hero "BT" was said to oversee the centralized protection racket at the mother of all "tiangge" centers, that famous mall in Binondo known as "168 building."

In the Chinese-Filipino community, they of course have a clear idea of who that "connection" is.

That's one. Two—they are also talking about a deal between a foreign multinational in this country and a government money machine.

Its name sounds like Pagcor. Remember that Pagcor boss Efraim Genuino is close to Mike the Knife. They come from the same Rotary Club in Makati.

They are so close that, when this cute administration assumed power, Genuino was immediately named boss of the gambling money machine, Pagcor.

Even ahead of the appointment of the finance secretary, for that matter!

As for item No. 3, a former congressperson intimated to our contacts that the former lawmaker saw the First Gentleman with bigtime businessmen in Hong Kong.

Said to have been seen travelling recently with Mike the Knife in Hong Kong was SM Group heir apparent Tessie Sy.

Also with them was the SM Group's hatchet man in the Equitable PCI Bank board, a former bank executive named Vicente Panlilio.

Panlilio is said to be close to stockbroker Vivian Yuchengco, who was also with the group in Hong Kong, being the favorite golfing companion of Mike the Knife.

Interestingly enough, joining them was another banker, Rey David, president of the state-owned Development Bank of the Philippines.

But David was also said to be the cock (i.e. "manok") of Mike the Knife to take the place of SSS boss Corazon de la Paz as head of the pension fund.

It's no wonder that unflattering talk is flying around the stock market about what they were cooking in that Hong Kong trip.

For one, the Sy family's SM Group is preying on Equitable PCI, wanting to take control of the bank by simply merging it with the group's Banco de Oro.

That means the SM Group can take control of the country's third largest bank—again, THIRD—without the Sy family's or the SM Group's having to pay for all of it.

So what has that got to do with Mike the Knife? When they went away on a trip abroad recently, was the merger part of the Hong Kong buffet?

Well, the government-run pension funds SSS and GSIS are the biggest investors in Equitable PCI, and so the SM Group needs them to agree to the merger.

If they do—say, with the, er, "blessings" of the Palace—the SM Group acquires another huge bank at no added cost to the Sy family. Tsk, tsk, tsk!

And if that happens, it will be close to impossible for the GSIS and the SSS to unload their P30 billion or so investment in the bank. They will be locked in.

Nobody in his or her right mind will want to buy minority shares in a bank that, in particular, is controlled by the SM Group.

That's why GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia is rather vocal against the merger.

On the other hand, SSS boss De la Paz is studying the SM Group's proposal. Whaaat?

Garcia revealed to media that a foreign group was interested in buying the GSIS holdings in Equitable PCI for P92 a share.

That is a good premium over the current price in the stock market of P63 each.

In comparison, under the merger proposal of the SM Group, the Equitable PCI shares in effect are valued at only less than P60 each—or lower than market price!

Now, if you were the SSS boss, what is there to think about, given the price of P92 from the foreign investor versus the price of P60 from the SM Group?

You don't think about it, right? Immediately, you reject the merger, right?

Unless of course there are other considerations such as, er, "instructions" from upstairs! Such as from somebody big at the Palace!

SMC beer sales up in China

Guangdong unit posted 21% growth to $21.4M in '05

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FOOD AND BEVERAGE GIANT San Miguel Corp. is doing better in China.

SMC said in a statement yesterday that revenue from its brewery operations in South China grew 21 percent last year to $21.4 million.

On the other hand, the volume of products from the San Miguel Guangdong Brewery (SMGB) in 2005 rose 16 percent.

This was attributed to moves by SMC to bolster its "Dragon" beer brand in the region, considered one of the fastest growing beer markets in China.

Last year, SMGB also developed new packaging for its brands, including a new canned variant for its local flagship brand, Dragon Beer.

The Guangdong brewery was inaugurated by San Miguel in 1994 as San Miguel Shunde Brewery.

It dominated the economy segment of the beer market in South China with the introduction of Valor in 640-milliliter bottles in the city of Shunde.

San Miguel Guangdong also gained wider access into the premium beer market in South China through San Miguel Pale Pilsen and Platinum Dragon Beer.

The beers won medals of quality excellence in this year's Monde Selection.

Market leader Dragon Beer, one of the top attractions in the annual Guangzhou Beer Festival, likewise won an award from the international quality rating institution.

Operations in Greater China showed a 13 percent improvement over the previous year due to strong Dragon and Blue Star volumes.

Consolidated beer international operating income for the nine-month period last year was $6.16 million, 14 percent better than 2004.

Tax cuts for salaried workers gain ground

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE PROPOSED MEASURES aimed at drastically reducing the taxes paid by individual income tax earners have gained momentum in the House ways and means committee.

At a hearing Tuesday called by committee chair Rep. Jesli Lapus, the Federation of Philippine Industries Inc. and the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. endorsed the tax relief, agreeing with Lapus that middle-income taxpayers deserved a tax break.

"If the overseas Filipino workers are our heroes in foreign exchange with billions of dollars in remittance, our salary-wage earners are the martyrs in outright revenue contribution of over P85 billion in income taxes," said Lapus, a former banker and economics professor.

Lapus noted that the Bureau of Internal Revenue reported that self-employed businessmen and professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, paid a measly P4.8 billion in income taxes in 2004.

In contrast, individual income earners comprised 84 percent of total individual income tax collections of the government for that year.

Rep. Joey Salceda, chair of the House economic affairs committee, estimated the "aggregate annual benefits to ordinary working families" could reach P8.9 billion if the measures were enacted.

"I've already written the President to certify this as urgent," said Salceda, who authored House Bill No. 3832, which is one of the 10 tax relief bills being "harmonized" by Lapus.

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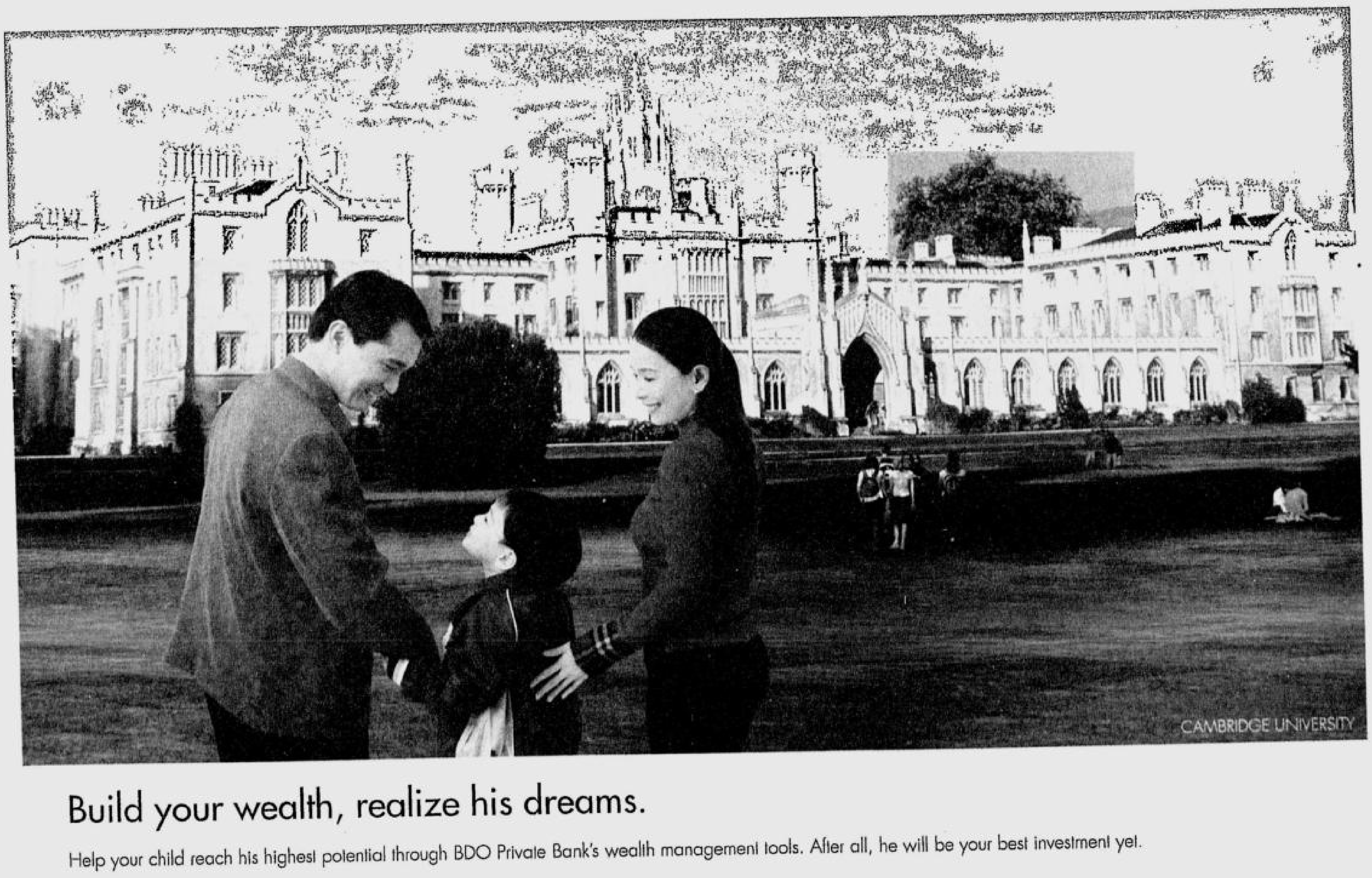

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Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o N. A. Nicolasora) starting January 19, 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00).

Prebid Conference shall be conducted on February 9, 2006, 10:00 a.m. at the Southern Negros Geothermal Production Field (SNGPF) Admin Conference Room. Site inspection shall commence at exactly 1:00 p.m. on the same day.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, not later than 2:00 p.m. on February 28, 2006 and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to the PNOC-EDC.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice is given that the Estate of the late MAGDALENA GALANG RAFANAN was extrajudicially settled among heirs as per Doc 146 Page 30 Book I Series 2005 before Notary Public Atty. Humilde S. Ferrer of Quezon City
PDI-Jan. 12,19 & 26,2006

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late CELESTINA JIMENEZ CAPELLAN was extrajudicially settled by her heirs before Notary Public Atty. Jimmy D. Lacebal of Mandaluyong City, per Doc. No. 464, Page No. 94, Book No. XXIV, Series of 2005
(PDI- Jan. 05, 12 & 19, 2006)

Notice is hereby given that Pilitol Corp. stock certificate no. 131813 for 3000 shares issued to Michael Dave T. Uy was reported lost. If no contest is received, new certificate will be issued.
PDI-Jan. 19, 26, & Feb. 2, 2006

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that Fil-Estate Land stock certificate no. 078803 for 10,000 shares and certificate no. 84725 for 1,700 shares issued to Michael Dave T. Uy was reported lost. If no contest is received, new certificate will be issued.
PDI- Jan 19, 26, & Feb. 2, 2006

Notice is hereby given that Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. Stock Certificate no. 98448 for 200 shares (old par value) and certificate no. 108978) for 40 shares (old par value) issued to Michael Tao Uy was reported lost. If no contest is received, new certificate will be issued.
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ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

In consonance with Republic Act 9184, the National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on **February 07, 2006** at **10:00 a.m.** at the **FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila**, among all interested rice suppliers for the supply of the following:

COMMODITY	ARRIVAL PERIOD Quantity	Arrival
A. 300,000 MT 25% BROKENS WELL MILLED RICE	10% OF THE VOL. TO BE AWARDED	FEB. 2006
	50% OF THE VOL. TO BE AWARDED	MAR. 2006
	BALANCE	APR. 2006
B. 50,000 MT 15% BROKENS WELL MILLED RICE	50,000 MT	WITHIN APR. 2006
C. 50,000 MT 25% BROKENS WELL MILLED RICE, IRON FORTIFIED RICE	50,000 MT	NLT MAY 2006

in fifty (50) kilograms net each in polypropylene bags suitable for rice export with NFA markings with an appropriated budget from corporate resources, as follows:

Amount	Specification
Php 0.769 B	15% brokens
Php 4.450 B	25% brokens
Php 0.850 B	iron fortified rice

Source countries shall be Thailand, Vietnam, China, Pakistan, Australia and/or U.S.

All interested suppliers are required to submit quotations in US$/MT, CFR, FO and FOB on the basis of Documents against Acceptance (D/A) with a tenor of one hundred twenty (120) days from receipt by NFA of the complete set of original documents required for payment and on the basis of mandatory countertrade and countertrade performed on best effort. Otherwise, bids shall be considered non-responsive. Offers for iron fortified rice shall be on an optional basis only. Maximum quantity to be offered for U.S., Pakistan and/or Australian original shall be 50,000 MT only.

Government and private suppliers who have delivered to the NFA within the last three (3) years (2003, 2004 and 2005) and do not have a bad track record may be awarded the following maximum volume for the 15% and 25% brokens long grain white rice:

PRIVATE — 50,000 MT (WITH GOOD TRACK RECORD)
25,000 MT (WITHOUT TRACK RECORD)
GOVERNMENT — 200,000 MT (WITH GOOD TRACK RECORD)
— 50,000 MT (WITHOUT TRACK RECORD)

For the iron fortified rice, the maximum volume to be awarded for private and government supplier with good track record is 50,000 MT and 25,000 MT for private and government supplier without track record.

Minimum volume to be offered per supplier shall be 10,000 MT per specification. Offerors shall indicate the minimum volume acceptable in case of award. Failure to do so, shall mean acceptance of the Seller the awarded volume.

Maximum load capacity of vessel shall be 15,000 MT.

Container shipment will be allowed for non-iron fortified rice only but up to a maximum volume of 15,000 MT only.

However, suppliers and/or source companies with pending import-related accounts/ liability prior 2004 are considered to have bad track record and are not allowed to participate in the bid.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 3% of the highest value of offered quantity in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank.

Winning bidders are required to submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the value of the awarded quantity within five (5) banking days after receipt of the notice of award in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank.

List of Eligibility Requirements and Instructions to Bidders maybe secured starting 12 January 2006 thru **MR. TOMAS R. ESCAREZ**, Assistant Department Manager and **MR. NESTOR U. PUANGCO**, Division Chief III, **Directorate for Marketing Operations, 5th Floor, NFA, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City with telephone numbers 712-1564; 742-4140; 743-8696; 711-7433; 740-1977; 712-1708; and 712-1572.**

The Terms of reference and offer sheets will be available from **January 12 to 27, 2006** (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P7,500.00.

The pre-bidding conference will be held on 25 January 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Submission of Bids will be on February 07, 2006 between 8:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila. Opening of bids will start exactly at 10:00 a.m.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required formality or defect therein and may accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) JESSUP P. NAVARRO
Deputy Administrator and
Chairman BAC

(PDI - January 12 & 19, 2006)

POEA 24-HR HOTLINES
722-1144 • 722-1155

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE-INFRASTRUCTURE
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Province of Cebu, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Infrastructure (BAC-INFRA), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) as **Triple A with Large "B"** classification for **Buildings – Structures**, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contract:

Title	: Construction of Cebu International Convention Center (Cebu Megadome) – Phase 1
Location	: Mandaue City, Cebu
ABC of Contract To be Bid	: P100,000,000.00
Duration	: Five (5) months
Scope of Work	: Clearing/Site Development, Building Construction (Foundation & Structures)

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the ABC to be bid, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC-INFRA will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening and in the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC-INFRA will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Submission of Eligibility Documents & Statements and Screening, Bid and Performance Securities, Pre-bidding Conferences, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract, shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

The schedule of activities is as follows:

BAC-INFRA Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI)	January 12-20, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	January 12-19, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Documents & Statements	January 12-20, 2006
4. Notice of Eligibility Check Results	January 24, 2006
5. Issuance of Plans and Bid Documents	January 24-27, 2006
6. Pre-bid Conference	February 1, 2006
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	February 13, 2006

The BAC-INFRA Secretariat will issue to prospective bidder's Eligibility Forms at the Provincial Engineer's Office, Legislative Building, Capitol Compound, Cebu City, upon their submission of a Letter of Intent and payment of non-refundable amount of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) to the Provincial Treasurer's Office. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to, and may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check from, the aforementioned address. For further inquiries, one may call the Secretariat at (032) 416-5400 local 110.

The Secretariat will issue Bidding Documents including Plans and Specifications only to bidders declared by the BAC-INFRA who are considered to be eligible to bid, upon payment to the Cash Division a non-refundable amount of Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00).

The Province of Cebu assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids and, reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding or not to award the contract.

(Sgd.) **EDUARDO T. HABIN**
Chairman

(PDI–January 12 & 19, 2006)
Posted at PGSO, PIO & www.cebu.gov.ph

LA/MAT 15701/2005 (DF013)
FCMC 7928/2005

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE
HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
MATRIMONIAL CAUSES NO. 7928 OF 2005

BETWEEN
ROSALINDA A. PERIO — Petitioner
Also known as BELLO, ROSALINDA P.
And
MARIO B. BELLO — Respondent

A DIVORCE PETITION HAS BEEN FILED AGAINST THE UNDER-MENTIONED MARIA B. BELLO, late of Bagong Pook, Magallanes, Cavite, Philippines, may apply at the Family Court Registry at M2 Wanchai Law Court, No. 12 Harbour Road, Hong Kong SAR for a copy of the Petition. If within one month he has not communicated with the Registry, the Court may hear the case in his absence.

Registrar

To be advertised as follows :
Once in Philippine Daily Inquirer, a newspaper circulating in the Philippines.

(PDI – Jan. 19, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Healthline 637-9999 www.philhealth.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 2006-001 g

BIDDING FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF PREMIUM CONTRIBUTION REMITTANCE FORMS (MI-5) FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUALLY PAYING MEMBERS

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) 2005, intends to apply the sum of Php3,000,140.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Bidding for the Procurement of Premium Contribution Remittance Forms (MI-5) for the use of Individually Paying Members. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

PhilHealth now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the printing of 55,008 pads of MI-5 forms, with the following specifications:
Delivery of the first 18,000 pads is required 15 days after acceptance of Notice to Proceed.

JOB TITLE	: MI-5 Remittance Form for the use of Individually Paying Members
QUANTITY	: 55,008 pads (11,001,600 sheets) (50 sets per pad @ 4 copies per set)
SIZE	: Width 7 inches x Length 5 inches
MATERIAL	: Imported Quality Colored Carbon-less Paper (Image retention should last for at least 4 to 5 years) Impression must be clear up to the last ply 1st ply - White Carbon-less paper 2nd ply - Yellow Carbon-less paper 3rd ply - Green Carbon-less paper 4th ply - Pink Carbon-less paper Wrapping Paper Cover Chipboard Back Cover
PROCESS	: Offset Printing/Red Gum Padded Back to back printing on all copies

Other specifications:

Serial Numbers	: Pre-numbered (9 digits) All Numeric (Crash Numbering) 55,008 pads (108236001 - 110986400)
Packaging	: 50 pads per corrugated box Serial numbers must be posted on two (2) opposite sides of the box

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/Sole Proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino Citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such after the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the **Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees (OSBAC)** in the Central Office of PhilHealth, Room 1107 11th floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City, and inspect the Bidding Documents from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from January 13 - 23, 2006 at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of Php3,000.00 cash. The prospective Bidder or his authorized representative shall receive the Bidding Documents personally.

PhilHealth will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **January 25, 2006 at 1:30 p.m.** at the **OSBAC Conference Room** (Rm. 1106), PhilHealth Central Office, 11th floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd. Bgy. Oranbo, Pasig City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the **OSBAC Conference Room on or before February 8, 2006, 10:30 a.m.** The official time shall be based on the wall clock located at the **OSBAC Conference Room**. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on February 8, 2006, 10:30 a.m. at the **OSBAC Conference Room.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

CY 2004 and CY 2005 is the relevant period for contracts which will be required to be submitted by PhilHealth.

PhilHealth reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees in the Central Office
MR. JOSEPH O. VERGARA
Rm. 1107, 11th Floor Citystate Centre
709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City
Tel. (02) 637-9999 locals 1128, 1130 and 1830
E-mail add: osbac@philhealth.gov.ph
Facsimile No. 637-4735

(Sgd.) VALENTIN C. GUANIO
Chairperson
Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services

(PDI-Jan.12 & 19, 2006)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND TESTING OF FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM FOR TRANSCO BUILDINGS 2 (NCC) AND 3 (SO)

Reference No.: *PB050525-RM0049 / PR No.: OAVP-05-0010484*

1. The *NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, Head Office Region* (TRANSCO-HO) through the *2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TransCo Board* intends to apply the sum of *Php 7,937,977.71* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *PR No. OAVP-05-0010484, Supply, Installation and Testing of Fire Protection System of TransCo Buildings 2 (NCC) and 3 (SO)*. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders who possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract (at least Registered as "Small B" with classification for Fire Protection Work, Category "C or D" for the *Supply, Installation and Testing of Fire Protection System of TransCo Buildings 2 (NCC) and 3 (SO)*. Delivery of the GOODS is required *in One Hundred Twenty (120) days*. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below from January 19, 2006 to February 20, 2006 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and upon payment of a non refundable fee in the amount of *Php 1,000.00*. The method of payment will be *Cash*. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The *TRANSCO-HO* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on *February 7, 2006/10:00 A.M.* at the *Admin. Conference Room.*
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before *February 21, 2006 / 10:00 a.m.* All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible curency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC)	PhP 79,379.78
2. Bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC)	PhP 119,069.67
3. Surety bond (2.5% of ABC)	PhP 198,449.45
4. Foreign government guarantee (100% of ABC)	PhP 7,937,977.71

7. Bid opening shall be on *February 21, 2006 / 10:00 AM* at the *Admin Conference Room same address below*. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center Complex, BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
Tel. No. (632) 9812206 / Fax No. (632) 9228432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) **ARMANDO N. OCHOA**
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI – January 19 & 25, 2006)

LA/MAT 16231/2005 (DP28)
FCMC 9712/2005

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE
HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
MATRIMONIAL CAUSES NO. 9712 OF 2005

BETWEEN
LUZ CHAN — Petitioner
Also known as FERRER, LUZ CHAN
And
ROMULO V. FERRER — Respondent

A DIVORCE PETITION HAS BEEN FILED AGAINST THE UNDER-MENTIONED ROMULO V. FERRER, late of #60 P. Burgos Street, Baguio City, Philippines, may apply at the Family Court Registry at M2 Wanchai Law Court, No. 12 Harbour Road, Hong Kong SAR for a copy of the Petition. If within one month he has not communicated with the Registry, the Court may hear the case in his absence.

Registrar

To be advertised as follows :
Once in Philippine Daily Inquirer, a newspaper circulating in the Philippines.

(PDI - Jan. 19, 2006)

UPGRADE 2006: The 17th U.P. Diliman Job Fair

THE UP OFFICE OF COUNSELING AND Guidance (UP OCG), UP Alumni Association and the U.P. Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants (UP JPIA) will be holding UPGRADE 2006, the 17th University Job Fair, from Jan. 23 to 27, 2006, at the Ang Bahay ng Alumni, UP Campus, Diliman. Students, especially those who are graduating, from UP Diliman and other colleges and universities are invited to this grand event. Job Hunt Basics, Orientation, and Power Dressing Seminar are some of the activities to watch out for. Please bring several copies of your resumé. The organizers will gladly welcome any inquiries regarding this event through the following: Tel. No./Fax No.: 926.4162. You may also contact us through any of the following: 0920.4060587 (Reynaline Tugade), 0916.2034170 (Kristy Abello), 0917.8584532 (Crystle Lorraine Tan).

OBITUARIES

"For God so loved the world, that He gave us His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have Everlasting life."
—John 3:16

In Loving Remembrance
of MOMMY

LINA BALIAT – ORAA NACARIO

July 6, 1936 - January 19, 2005

FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF HER
BIRTH TO ETERNAL LIFE

Masses.

St. Anthony Parish Church	Iriga (8:30AM)
Capella Sn. Ildefonso	Roma / Italia (7PM)
Sn. Francisco Church	Naga (5:30PM)
Peñafrancia Basilica	Naga (5:00PM)

Our Dearly Beloved

ANITA MONTINO BATAC

Joined our Creator on January 11, 2006
at the age of 79.

Her loving husband **Amado Batac, Sr.** (†); children **Nene, Dante, Edna, Allen, Ching, Jun, Carmel, Peter, Christie, Elmo, Grace, Dada**; sister **Asuncion**; sons-in-law, daughters-in-law and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains will arrive on January 20, 2006 from Orange County, California and will lie in state at Tahao Washington Drive, Legaspi City

Interment will be at the Prestine Memorial Park, Legazpi City on a date to be announced later.

JOSEFINA VILLAFLOR-SEGUI

Peacefully joined our Creator on
January 16, 2006 at the age of 76.

She shall be missed by her loving children **Vicky** and **Warren**, **Nona**, **Nena** and **Orly**, **Nini** and **Nilbert**, **Tony** and **Joy**; grandchildren **Cris**, **Lorena**, **Bonnie**, **Naireen**, **Eilro**, **Oriel**, **Nevin**, **Maisie**; her older sister **Pilarita**.

Her remains lie in state at the Memorial Chapels of Sta. Rita Church, Philam Homes.

The funeral mass will be held at the same Chapels at 10:00 Sunday, January 22, 2006. Interment will follow at the Holy Cross Memorial Park.

Please join us in mourning and remembering this warm and astute woman;
a generous mother, friend, relative, colleague, co-worker.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OBITUARIES

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2006

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P245 per column centimeter
(All prices exclusive of E-VAT)

DEADLINE
for reservations / cancellations / corrections
Monday to Sunday
12:00 noon
Day before publication

Petron Corporation

joins the family of

Chairman Nicasio I. Alcantara

in praying for the eternal repose
of their mother,

Mrs. Ladislawa Inquimboy Alcantara

Her body lies in state
at the Sanctuario de San Antonio,
Forbes Park, Makati City.

A Requiem Mass
will be celebrated at 9:00 a.m.,
on Thursday, 19 January 2006.

Interment shall follow at the
Manila Memorial Park,
Sucat, Parañaque.

REV. FR. FRANCISCO ARANETA, S.J.

September 21, 1918 – January 17, 2006

First Filipino Rector / President, Ateneo de Cagayan (Xavier University) – 1956
First Filipino Rector / President, Ateneo de Manila University – 1959-1965 and 1970-1972

*Joined his parents, **GREGORIO ARANETA** and **CARMEN ZARAGOZA**, his sisters, **CARMEN**, **CONCHITA**, **PACITA LOPEZ OBIETA**, **CONSUELO CUESTA**, **ROSA ALCUAZ**, **TERESA ALBERT**, **MARGARITA SINGH** and his brothers **JOSE**, **SALVADOR**, **J. ANTONIO**, **RAMON**, **VICENTE** and **LUIS** on January 17, 2006.*

His remains lie in state at the COLLEGE CHAPEL of the Ateneo de Manila University. Holy Mass will be celebrated daily at 8:00 P.M.

He will be transferred to the Church of the GESU of the Ateneo de Manila University on Sunday, 22 January, 2006 where the Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 2:00 P.M. Burial will immediately follow at the Sacred Heart Novitiate in Novaliches.

His nephews, nieces, friends and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

(The Infirmary Assistant at his side said he went "gently into the light". He looked like he just went back to sleep after a bit of coughing.)

OUR DEARLY BELOVED

DR. MARIANO "NANING" N. MORALES, SR.

U.P. MEDICINE '33

of Mulanay, Quezon & Daet, Camarines Norte

*Peacefully joined our Lord
on January 17, 2006 at the age of 99.*

His loving wife **Lourdes Santos** (†); children & children-in-law **Dr. Mariano Jr.**, **Marita** and **Nap King**, **Angelita**, **Dra. Lourdes** & **Dr. Al Salido**, **Remy**, **Chit** & **Armin Sebial**; grandchildren **Lorian** & **George Botsakos**, **Anthony**, **Michael**, **Raymond**, **Lito** & **Mylene**, **Francis**, **Patrick**, **Armin Brian**, **Jan Andrew** & great grandson **Abel**, relatives & friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the family residence in Mulanay, Quezon.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 21, 2006 at the Memorial Park.

FR. FRANCISCO Z. ARANETA, S.J.

was called home to the Lord on Tuesday, 17 January 2006

Wake : College Chapel, Ateneo de Manila University,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City
Mass will be celebrated every evening at 8:00 P.M.
Funeral Mass : at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, 22 January
in the University Church of the Gesù,
Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Q.C.
Interment : Sacred Heart Novitiate Cemetery, Novaliches,
Quezon City, immediately after the Funeral Mass

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE REPOSE OF HIS SOUL.

WE
DESIGN
OBITUARY
FOR
FREE.

"You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in your presence, the delight at your right hand forever ..."
Psalm 16:11

LUISITA ARO MERCADO

of Buli, Taal, Batangas

(September 8, 1917 – January 17, 2006)

Her loving husband **Roberto**; sons **Romeo**, **Virgilio** (†), **Reynaldo**, **Victor**; daughters **Belen**, **Erlinda**, **Paulita**, **Imelda** and **Mamerta**; grandchildren and great grandchildren, relatives and friends mourn her passing away and request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel 11, 3rd Floor, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Friday, January 20, 2006 at La Funeraria Paz after the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

Our Dearly Beloved
"Maeng"

Ysmael Barcebal Zepeda

of Tabaco City

*Peacefully joined our Lord
on January 13, 2006 at the age of 70.*

His wife **Corazon** (deceased); loving child **Merla** and her husband **Emmanuel**; grandchildren **Eric**, **Tony**, **Neal**, **Emmyrelle**; brothers and sister **Expedito**, **Andres**, **Miguela** and **Napoleon**; nephews and nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal request of his soul.

His remains lie at Chinese Chapel, Tabaco City.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 21, 2006 at Malinao Catholic Cemetery.

"There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heaven..."
Ecclesiastes 3:11

CAPT. NARCISO MAYOL-LISTON

(PN,GSC, MNSA) (Ret.)

(Oct. 29, 1936 – Jan. 15, 2006)

of San Francisco, Cebu, by the grace & mercy of God joined Him on January 15, 2006.

His wife: Elvisa (Liza), children: Gang, Nanette, Boy Jun & Irene and Louie & Nonie; grandchildren: Kurt, Malka, Bilboy, Spreckee, Kyle, Nicole, Nathaniel, Luigi & Nayama, and great granddaughter Rachel, invite "Papus" relatives and friends to join them lay "Papu" to his final rest on Saturday, January 21, 2006, after the 8 am Mass at Libingan ng mga Bayani, Bayani Road, Ft. Bonifacio, Taguig City

His remains lie in state at the mortuary of Libingan ng mga Bayani, Bayani Road, Ft. Bonifacio, Taguig City.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate; ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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ABDON "DON " B. BUENSALIDA

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Past President - **Rotary Club of Bagumbayan, Manila**
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Chairman - **PCHI Foundation**

Peacefully joined his Creator on January 17, 2006 at the age of 74

His loving wife, **Domeng Poblete Buensalida**, children: **Rolly & Marita, Glad & Roel, Ferdy & Loida, Grace, Bong;** apo's: **Andrew, Angela, Jasmin, Matthew, Judeanne, Don Isaac, Pauline, Don Pio, Lady & Christian, Marta, Ferdinand Jr., Don John, Anne Jillianne,** great grandson **Don Ferdinand,** relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Aguinaldo Chapel, La Funenaria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park), Parañaque City

7:00 pm Mass followed by Necrological Service on Thursday, January 19, 2006

A Requiem Mass will be celebrated at 3:00 pm on Friday, January 20, 2006. Interment shall follow at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat

---

Conchita Ledesma y Arenas

widow of **Carlos Ledesma**

*Peacefully joined her Creator
on January 12, 2006
Vancouver, B.C., at the age of 73.*

Her children **Jules** and **Assunta**, **Julie** & **Ric**, **Carlos, Jr.**, **Tommy**, and **Carla**; grandchildren **Cristina**, **Gian Carlo**, **Natasya**, **Fatima**, **Nikolai**, **Oscar Vicente** & **Angelo Fortunato**; siblings **Ramon Arenas** (†), **Teresita Roxas** (†), **Mariano Arenas**, **Lourdes Tankeh**, **Rosario Westly**, and **Vicente Arenas, Jr.**

Relatives and friends request to offer prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains is arriving on 19th January 2006. She will be in state at the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City, starting 6:00 p.m. until January 21, 2006. She will be flown to Bacolod on January 22, 2006. A Requiem Mass will be celebrated on January 24, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.

Interment shall follow at the Bacolod Memorial Park, Bacolod City.

In lieu of flowers, kindly send your donations to any of the following: The Breast Cancer Society; Assumption Convent-San Lorenzo Village, Makati City; and Carmelite Monastery, Mandalagan, Bacolod City.

Treasury offers bonds swap deal

Improving domestic debt management

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF TREASURY said it would offer holders of peso-denominated bonds the opportunity to exchange their holdings for newly issued Treasury bonds with maturities of three, five and seven years.

The move is expected to enable the government to better manage domestic debts by stretching the average maturity of the obligations by one year from the current 4.7 years.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in a press briefing that the Treasury would auction off next month 3-, 5-, and 7-year bonds, which existing government security holders can acquire by exchanging their current T-bond holdings.

The Treasury said the government would be offering a minimum of P30 billion in 3-year bonds, to be auctioned off on Feb. 10; P25 billion worth of 5-year bonds, and P20 billion worth of 7-year bonds. The 5-year and 7-year bonds would be offered on Feb. 24.

"The response (of investors) was tremendous because many have been waiting for this," Cruz said. He noted that the program would address the problem of some investors who are having difficulty selling their bonds in the capital market.

Prior to the press briefing yesterday afternoon, Cruz and other finance officials met with securities investors to discuss the program.

"We're trying to simplify and make the market more orderly and, in so doing, the market benefits a great deal in terms of providing it with greater liquidity and improving pricing," Cruz told reporters.

In the meantime, Credit Suisse First Boston, the financial arranger of the debt exchange program, said there have been P500 billion worth of bonds issued in the past with average maturity of three years or less; P293 billion worth of bonds with maturity of three to five years, and P92 billion worth of bonds with maturity of five to seven years.

Credit Suisse said it was hoping that at least 20 percent of current domestic bond holders would avail themselves of the offer.

The Treasury said that while it had set minimum amounts for these debt offerings, the government was willing to accommodate all the holders of the P885 billion worth of bonds issued in the past who were willing to exchange their holdings for those to be issued next month.

"We are signaling to the investing community that we are going to manage our debt actively," said Finance Secretary Margarito Teves in a statement.

The debt consolidation program will follow similar initiatives in 1996 and 2002 when the government exchanged existing bonds with new issues to manage its liabilities.

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INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS

ASEAN TOURISM FORUM A dance troupe from the Ma-a Elementary School performs at the Davao International Airport to welcome delegates to the Asean Tourism Forum. The meeting opened in Davao City on Jan 17. BING GONZALES, PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

BPI unloading ₱6B worth of bad assets

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISlands, the country's second biggest lender, plans to unload P5-P6 billion worth of bad assets this year, whether or not the Special Purpose Vehicle law is extended.

BPI president Aurelio Montinola III told reporters the bad assets would be sold in about three separate tranches as part of the bank's continuing asset clean-up.

In a separate interview, BPI senior vice president for asset recovery management group Senen Matoto said that half of the P5-P6 billion worth of assets to be sold this year consisted of ropoas while the other half were nonperforming loans.

"We're hoping that the SPV Law extension would be passed soon so we could move this forward but even without it, we'll push through with the sale," Matoto said.

The SPV Law, which expired April last year, waived some of the taxes and fees slapped on the sale or transfer of assets, including documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and expanded value added tax. It also cut registration/transfer fees by 50 percent.

Last year, BPI unloaded about P4.6 billion in bad assets--P2.1 billion in real and properties owned and acquired (ropoas) and P2.5 billion in non-performing loans.

Matoto said this year's sale would trim the bank's bad asset load, including those from recently acquired Prudential Bank, by about 15 percent.

Within the next 60 days, Matoto said BPI would be able to finalize the first tranche of the NPL sale for this year worth P2-P4 billion.

BPI now has total resources of P521 billion, deposits of P405 billion and gross loan portfolio of P232 billion.

BPI had to absorb more bad loans from Prudential Bank due to a failed SPV deal hatched by the old owners of the acquired bank. , as well as some differences in accounting treatment.

BPI bought 91.5 percent of the Santos family's Prudential Bank in August last year through block purchases at the Philippine Stock Exchange worth P5.6 billion.

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DOE steps up efforts to promote flex-fuel use

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY said it would ask local vehicle makers to make available hybrid vehicles with flex-fuel engines in the local market.

It said it would start talks with local assembles to iron out issues related to this, including the importation of such vehicles. The department, however, wanted to encourage the local assembly of flex-fuel vehicles.

Ford Motors earlier committed to invest $20 million for the establishment of a factory that would produce flex-fuel vehicles, or those that run on alternative fuels, in the country.

Energy utilization and management bureau (EUMB) director Mario Marasigan said the DOE wanted to get other vehicle manufacturers to do the same.

"We'll start negotiating with car manufacturers soon for the possibility of bringing in hybrid cars and vehicles with ethanol-adoptive engines," he said.

An industry source said Japanese car maker Honda Motors was also considering bringing into the market vehicles that ran on compressed natural gas (CNG) or biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said in an earlier interview that the DOE had yet to receive formal expressions of interest or concrete commitments from other vehicle manufacturers .

But with or without formal expressions of interest, Marasigan said the DOE would seek the help of vehicle manufacturers in advancing the country's efforts to promote the use of alternative fuels.

He said the DOE would also spearhead talks with local oil firms to discuss issues surrounding the pre-blending of ethanol with gasoline and coco methyl ester (CME) with diesel.

PSE gives tips on investing

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXchange is holding at 2 p.m. today a special briefing on stock market investing at its headquarters in Ortigas, Pasig City.

PSE president and chief executive officer Francis Lim said the forum was designed for small investors. The exchange has invited prominent stock market analyst Luz Lorenzo of ATR-Kim Eng Securities Inc. to share with the audience her know-how and market outlook for the year.

Participants will also get a better look at upcoming initial public offerings and a glimpse of potential offerings in the pipeline this year, Lim added.

For more details, call 688-7537 and 38.

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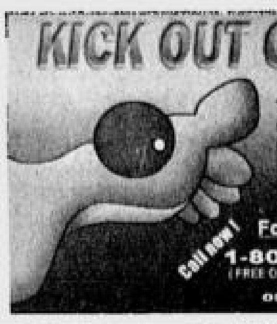
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso



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XYRUS HANS

For 2006, I'm making it my mission to find great places to eat at reasonable prices. Read on, Xyrus!

Two Tuesdays ago, I found myself at Seis Sabores, the new playground of Dr. Ricky Soler. If you recall, he is the brilliant man behind the research on *kare-kare* we published some months ago.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

Soler is no stranger to the world of food. Among his many ventures were setting up the Tempura Misono and the country's first disco, The Circuit, at the Hyatt Regency Manila when he was the hotel's CEO. He was also the largest owner of the Agoo Playa.

Two years ago, he felt uneasy about retiring and decided to set up Home Meals Kitchens Corp., with the intention of delivering—on order—paella to homes and offices. Home Meals has institutionalized what is now known as "Paella Parties"—festive occasions where it serves, besides paella (delivered ready-to-eat or cooked on-site by personal chefs), other Spanish delicacies.

From bodega to bistro

Recently, HMK and the owners of Barcino Gourmet joined forces and came up with Seis Sabores Bistro. Their shared vision is to reintroduce the best-loved and most popular Spanish meals in their original, traditional and classical forms using authentic ingredients and cooking methods, in an environment with a cheerful likeness to an old bodega turned into a bistro. This is a small, family-type restaurant which serves and sells wine, as well as other little Spanish deli treats, at reasonable prices.

Over glasses of Primum Vitae Valformosa Rioja Tinto Joven (Valformosa is one of the great wine houses of Spain especially famous for its *cavas*, the exact same equivalent as French champagne), was from Rioja, one of the best wine regions of Spain and, if only for that, held enough merit. Even Hemingway seems to agree as he often makes mention of Riojas in his stories. Tinto Joven is a young red wine bottled after less than a year from harvest. This exceptional young red has a strong, firm aroma, a well-bodied palate and a lingering finish with just the right acidity. Made from Tempranillo grapes, which are among the best varieties in the world, this is a really good deal at P350 a bottle, restaurant price.

Paella talk

Over *cuzuelas* of Fabada, Costilla de Adan (tender, delicious ribs) and paella, our discussion drifted to Soler's firm beliefs on the perfect paella, a belief he shares with Lorenzo

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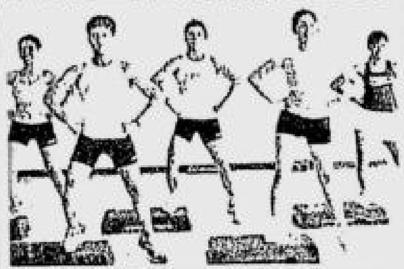

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What 'broadband' is all about

THE CONSUMER

Mariella Velasco Giron

LIKE MANY CONSUMERS, WE DIDN'T understand this new development in Internet service called broadband access. But we're getting a clearer idea of what it is all about now that our mailbox is getting consumer complaints along with press releases, fliers and invitations from service providers to switch from our traditional dial-up service to broadband.

Broadband had been hyped by fliers and advertisements: "incredible access speed," "fastest way to surf [the Internet], download-upload online info, games and entertainment," "30-percent times faster than conventional dial-up modem."

Simply put, broadband is a sweeping term for super high-speed Internet access.

This weekend, we received a press release from Rep. Joseph Santiago giving us detailed information about the local broadband market.

"We expect Internet use in the country to grow by leaps and bounds in the months ahead as low-priced dial-up and broadband Internet services draw more subscribers," he predicted.

Santiago explained, "Broadband is attractive, especially to landline subscribers because they can use their telephones for voice calls while staying connected to the Internet all the time."

Here are more data from Santiago's well-researched report:

- The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) charges P840 for a package covering basic monthly landline service and unlimited Internet access. Other service providers, he added, offer unlimited online use for as low as P399 monthly.
- As of September 2005, PLDT had 76,000 broadband Internet subscribers, an increase of 54 percent over its 49,500 users in September 2004.
- Smart Communications Inc. and Globe had, between them, about 20,000 wireless broadband subscribers as of September 2005.

Santiago, former chief of the National Telecommunications Commission, is currently vice chair of the house transportation and communications committee.

Complaints

This one is from engineer Victoria Manansala in Taiwan: "My family applied for a DSL connection in New Manila. After being on the waiting list for more than one month, the final response was that no installation could be made because there was no available port. And yet, this [telephone company] advertises that it provides quick service in five days.

"Here [in Taiwan], you apply for a DSL connection in the afternoon, and you get the service the next day."

(We forwarded a copy of the complaint to the company's customer service desk. The desk supervisor promised to communicate with engineer Manansala.)

In his e-mail, Oggie Ramos of Cityland 8, Makati, warned about overzealous broadband salespersons who didn't deliver on their promise. He said, in September, he signed up with a provider after making it clear to the sales representative that he had no landline and he was using a Macintosh computer. The salesman assured him there was no problem.

Ramos wrote: "The delivery was prompt. But to my chagrin, the unit didn't have driver-installers for Macintosh. And, worse, no interconnection to a landline link was made as promised. I sent an e-mail to the manager of the service company who replied promptly and said the overzealous salesperson had been fired. The manager also assured me that they would get installer-drivers for Mac users like me."

But Ramos did not hear from the manager again so he said he was now applying instead for Smart Wi-Fi service.

From Jun Inciong of Cainta: "Smart's Wi-Fi service was supposed to provide up to 384 kbps wireless, Always-On-Guaranteed Internet access. But a week after installation, it has been an endless struggle to [access] the Internet, even with a simple task such as reading my mail. To top it all, there is a lock-in subscription period of one year. One has to pay up to three times more than the installation fee for disconnection of a service that is [almost] non-existent."

(Smart's customer service representative promised to get in touch with Mr. Inciong.)

PLDT responds

Bhelle Rance Ordoña of PLDT MyDSL Customer Care sent us a copy of their response to the complaint of DSL subscriber V. Hughes about spam mail:

"We would like to inform you (Hughes) that unsolicited/spam mail you received could be hoax messages being sent via SMTP to propagate this kind of mail. Hoaxes usually arrive in the form of an e-mail that contains bogus information that mislead users. Some of these hoax messages also 'spoof' different e-mail addresses in the To or From field... spam mail [may also be] sent by a sponsor of an online service that you unintentionally visited previously over the Internet."

Ordoña advised the subscriber to delete spam or filter out/block unwanted addresses or domain names to prevent entry of unsolicited mail. This could be done by activating the e-mail filtering feature included in e-mail programs such as Outlook Express, Microsoft Outlook or Eudora.

A last resort, according to Ordoña, would be for Ms Hughes to change her e-mail address. The process would take 24 to 48 hours.

Those red envelopes are back

MCDONALD'S KICKS OFF THE YEAR of the Dog and marks its 25th anniversary with discounts and freebies on your favorites with the McDonald's Ang Pao.

The traditional Chinese lucky red envelope, Ang Pao, contains eight special coupons that may be used to get discounts on Chicken McDo, Burger McDo, McSpaghetti, Big Mac, McChicken and Big Breakfast meals.

Coupons will also entitle holders to free Coke upsize and Nestea refills.

The McDonald's Ang Pao coupons are valid for dine-in, takeout, drive-thru and Dial 8-McDo delivery until March 15.

McDonald's, the world's No. 1 fast-food chain, is celebrating its 25th year of providing high-quality products at good value to Filipinos.

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The kitchen as classroom

THE JULIUS MAGGI KITCHEN WILL hold a "Cooking for Two" demo and a lecture on table etiquette and table setting will also be held.

The sessions will be held 2-5 p.m., Jan. 19, 21, 24 and 26, and 9 a.m.-12 noon, on Jan. 21 and 28, at Julius Maggi Kitchen, G/F Nestlé Center, 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City. Call 7261016 or 7274137.

The Nestlé Club is also offering the first of the two series of paying classes dubbed Fresh Pasta on Jan. 28, 2-6 p.m. For only P350, learn how to make spaghetti, fettuccine, linguine and angel hair from scratch, and its matching traditional sauces.

Nestlé club members who bring along friends who are not yet members may win exciting prizes in the Member-Get-Member Promo if they are first to arrive with the most number of invitees.

Japanese food toppings

The Reggie Aspiras School of Culinary Arts will conduct the following classes:

Jan. 20: Brisket—Whole Marinated Barbecued Slab of Tender Beef Brisket with six barbecue sauces; salad, side dishes and dessert.

Jan. 21: Japanese Rice Toppings—Best Ever Beef Bowl, Katsudon, Oyako Don, Unaju, Katsu Curry and Tori Zosui (Japanese-style Chicken Risotto).

Jan. 23: America—The Best Chili con Carne, Texas-style Barbecued Beef Brisket with Jambalaya, Shrimp Creole with Dirty Rice and Southern Chocolate Cake.

Jan. 25: My Favorite Pastas from Way Back—Pasta with Scallops and Sun-dried Tomatoes, Pasta with Scallops, Shrimps and Mushrooms and Crab Pasta Sicilian.

Call 9289296, 9273008, 6335162, 6474744, 0917-8399888.

Free choco demo

A demonstration on chocolate praline making will be held 12 noon-2 p.m., Jan. 21 by students of the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, in Bakery World 2006 (International Expo of Equipment & Supplies for the Bakery and Catering Industries) at the World Trade Center.

Now on its second year, Bakery World 2006 will be held Jan. 19-21. Held simultaneously are Sweets and Dairy Expo '06, the Flavorings and Food Ingredients Fair, and Catering Expo 2006.

Call DLS-CSB School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management at 4007408 or www.bakeryworldexpo.com.

Nyonya cooking

Food enthusiast Danny de la Cuesta will hold a Nyonya cooking demonstration on Jan. 24, 1:30-4:30 p.m., at the San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center, Legazpi cor. Eagle Streets, Barrio Ugong, Pasig City.

The session, "Appreciating Nyonya Cuisine," will discuss the distinctive cooking that originated in Penang and Singapore. Nyonya is a unique blend of Malay and Chinese cooking styles and characterized by sweet, sour and pungent flavors.

Fee is P800 per participant. Call 6719876 local 402, 2771, 404 and 405. Early reservation and payment is required. Limited slots available. Visit www.mygreatfood.com.

Starting a food business

MB&G/Proactive conducts Managing a Restaurant/Canteen Seminar-Workshop on Jan. 23-27, 1-5 p.m.

The five-day training will cover such topics as planning the concept, menu, location, layout and equipment; hygiene and sanitation; human resource development; and cost control, among others.

Reservations are on a first-come-first-served basis. Call 8213583 or 0915-4315375. Seminar fee is P5,000 per participant, inclusive of manual and handouts, certificate of completion, and workshop materials and equipment.

Feedback from foodies . . .

From page C6

have decided to have *lechon* right away. Their next question was where to order. One reader even forwarded me her message to relatives to contact my suggestions. Hope they're not disappointed.

Lechon overseas is also not easy to get or, if available, it's usually not up to par with what we can get here. New York resident Yvette Fernandez Ferreol, winner of the 2005 Doreen Gamboa Fernandez Food Writing Award, had Filipino food for her Noche Buena: *pancit, lumpia, hamon,* plus *lechon* that disappointed because the skin wasn't crisp. I did suggest that placing the *lechon* back into the oven will make the skin crisp again, something to be tried the next big event they have this roasted wonder.

Ferreol also said that Cendrillon, a' restaurant in New York owned by Filipino couple Romy and Amy Dorotan, had a pork menu of 12 courses last November. Unfortunately, there was no *lechon*, just *lechon kawali*.

Those were just some of the e-mails sent in reaction to the past columns. Many asked for restaurant recommendations. One described his family coming in from the United States as "savvy Californians who don't cringe on anchovy and duck embryo dishes." I responded to each request but that included a warning that I can't be responsible for quality that has deteriorated when I was last there.

E-mail me at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

HENY SISON
CULINARY SCHOOL

THE ESSENTIAL BAKING & PASTRY SERIES. This 26 – day hands-on class will cover the basics of pastry, desserts, bread baking as well as cake decorating. It is suitable for those seeking an entry-level position in pastry shop, hotel or restaurants. Classes begin on **January 31 – March 29, 2006.** Classes are held every **Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays** from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

THE ESSENTIAL COOKING SERIES: This 20-day hands on class is our innovative way of teaching the basics of cooking & baking. This program is for anyone who wants to work towards becoming a professional chef. Class begins **February 10 – April 28, 2006.** Classes are held every **Fridays to Saturdays** from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Tuition fee includes ingredients, manual, aprons, chef's jacket and chef's kit. For more information call **726-5316 or 412 7792** and ask Rita or Jenny

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

February 1 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **NEW CLASS! NEW FRESH SAUSAGES & MEAT ITEMS TO MAKE AT HOME by: Chef Jane Paredes,** , Food Consultant, trained at the Culinary Institute of America Hyde Park, New York and Peter Kump's New York Cooking School * **Recipes:** Spanish Style Chorizo, Chinese Sausage, Breakfast Sausage, Polish Kielbasa, Chicken Ham with Glaze, Chicken Liver Spread, Seafood Terrine and Hamburger. **Demonstration with student participation. P3,000**

February 2 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. –4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **POULTRY COOKERY by: Chef Jane Paredes** * We'll teach you how to grill, broil, roast, sauté, bake, braise & stew poultry products from chicken, duck, turkey & quail. Carving techniques included.. **Full participation P2,500**

February 3 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **COFFEE & TEA CLASS by: Chef Jane Paredes** *Fundamentals of coffee & tea preparation. From basic brew to specialty beverages. How to accompany coffee & tea with pastries, sandwiches & other savory bites will be covered. **Full participation. P3,000**

February 3 (Friday) 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) **COMMERCIAL BREAD BAKING WORKSHOP I by: Chef Jill Sandique,** Food Consultant & Food Stylist, Blue Ribbon graduate at Peter Kumps New York Cooking School **P2,500**

February 4 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. –4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **GIFTS FROM THE PANTRY by: Chef Jane Paredes P1,500**

February 4 (Saturday) 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) **TALKING BREADS: A WORKSHOP by: Chef Jill Sandique P2,500**

February 6 (Monday) 9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (classroom A) **BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS by: Heny Sison P1,500**

February 6 (Monday) 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) **SPECIAL COURSE ON COOKIES by: Heny Sison P1,500**

February 6 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Classroom B) **NEW CLASS! BARBECUE WITH SAUCES & DIPS: WORKSHOP by: Chef Sam de Leoz,** Food Consultant, Stylist, Photographer, Caterer, Food demonstrator and Culinary Competiton Events Consultant specializing in Basic & Classical Cookery; International & Asian Cuisine. Hands-on Barbecue Workshop providing innovative method prepared for small entrepreneur and caterer in order to pay the way for business opportunities and increase the revenue for the coming holiday season. *Spicy Buffalo Wings w/ Blue Cheese Dip & Celery Stick, Famous Aling N2 Barbecue w/ Melitzanosalata (Spicy Over Gin Dip), Indonesian Mixed Satay: Mixed Beef & Lamb w/ Sambal Kacang (Peanut Sauce), Yakitori w/ Mango Black Bean Salsa, Grilled Seafood Medley: Prawns, Scallops & Fish Fillet w/ Mustard – Dill Vinaigrette, Grilled Sausage w/ Cilantro Aioli Dip, Amorgozo (Ampalaya) & Smoked Fish Morsels w/ Cottage Cheese & Garlic Crunch Dressing, Java Rice. P2,500

February 7 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) **HEALTHY GOURMET COOKING SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE 2 & 3 by: Jacqueline H. Alleje,** owner of Rizal Dairy Farm, Swiss-Pinoy restaurateur (Vieux Chalet Swiss restaurant), organic caterer and food consultant (Petra's naturally green, global, gourmet) **Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. P3,500**

February 8 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **BAKING I by: Heny Sison P1,500**

February 9 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **NEW CLASS! WAFFLES & PUFFS: A WORKSHOP by: Chef Jacqueline Ang Po,** Pastry Chef of Fleur de Lys Patisserie, dean's list graduate, California Culinary Academy *Belgian & American Style Waffles and its variations – Blueberry, Chocolate Chip, Apple Cinnamon plus different toppings & sauces for the waffles. **Puffs** – Caramel Cream Puffs, Chocolate Eclairs and Churros! **P2,500**

February 10 (Friday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **NEW CLASS! CHEESECAKE GALORE by: Heny Sison** *Mango Cheesecake, Pandan Cheesecake, French Country Cheesecake, Feather Light Cheesecake, Green Tea Souffle Cheesecake, Japanese Cottony Cheesecake. **P1,500**

February 11 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) **SECRETS NO MORE! by: Heny Sison P3,000**

February 13 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) **HEALTHY GOURMET COOKING SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE I by: Jacqueline Haessig Alleje . Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. P2,800**

February 13 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) **NEW CLASS I HEIRLOOM RECIPES & SIGNATURE CATERING DISHES (PART II) by: Chef Sam de Leoz,** Inherited recipes, secrets and signature catering dishes cooking demonstration with student participation. *Kare-Kare, Southern Beef Kalderata, Pan-fried Tongue Steak w/ Kikkoman Butter Sauce, Lengua w/ Sauce Robert, Grilled Chicken Marinated in Pineapple Barbecue Sauce, Kilayen (Tita Baby's Pampangga-Style) in Wine Stew w/ Liver puree, Tropical Fruit Salad. **Demonstration w/ student participation. P2,500**

February 14 (Tuesday) 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) **CHOCOLATE ARTISTRY by: Heny Sison P2,000**

February 15 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **NEW CLASS! NEW ASIAN COOKING 4 : THAI COOKING by: Chef Sam de Leoz** Classic Thai Cooking made easy for home cooking *Son-In-Law Eggs, Fresh Corn pancakes, Red/Green Curry paste from scratch, Tom Yum Goong, Phad Thai, Northern Pork Curry, Chicken in Pandan Leaves, Mango with Sticky Rice. **Demonstration with student particpation. P2,500**

February 16 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! . **SWEET BUT SUGAR FREE CAKES by: Chef Jacqueline Ang Po** *Classic Desserts like Strawberry Cheesecake, French Apple Pie Chocolate Cake, Banana Chocolate Muffin, Poppy Seed Cake, Carrot Bars w/ Cream Cheese Icing, Chocolate Walnut Cookies. For people who are conscious of sugar intake. **P1,500**

February 17-18 (Friday & Saturday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **NEW CLASS1 DANISH & CROISSANTS WORKSHOP by: Heny Sison Recipes:** Prune Pinwheels, Apricot Bow Tie Cream Cheese Danish, Sticky Buns, Pain Au Chocolat (Chocolate Roll), Chocolate Pistachio Rolls & Croissant. **P2,000**

February 20 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **SPECIAL FLOWER ARRANGEMENT** by: Glenn Remorca * Learn the different styles of table arrangements & home decors. **Demonstration, lectures and hands-on production. P3,000**

February 20 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) **POPULAR CHINESE DISHES II by: Chef Katherine Sion,** restaurateur (Ding Hao & Fat Kat restaurant), caterer and an expert in Chinese cuisine. **P1,700**

February 21 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) **NEW CLASS! HEALTHY GOURMET COOKING: COCONUT LOVERS'ALL DAY RECIPES by: Jacqueline Haessig Alleje** *Learn about the scientifically proven health aspects of coconut oil and how to cook with it. Recipes will cover vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. **Recipes:** Piña Colada Fruit Drink, Yogurt Smoothie, Coconut Mayonnaise with organic Vegetable Sticks, Sesame Chicken Salad, Creamy Zucchini Soup, Gingered Sweet Potatoes in Coconut Sauce, Lamb and Squash Curry, Chocolate Cream Puffs and Eclair. **P2,500**

February 22 (Wednesday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **NEW CLASS! BAKING W/ CHOCOLATES: WORKSHOP by: Heny Sison** *Triple Chocolate Cookies, Chocolate Bread, Lamingtons, Chocolate Macaroons, Devils Food Cake w/ Chocolate Ganache. **P2,500**

February 23 (Thursday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **NEW CLASS! MY FAVORITE CAKES PART II by: Heny Sison** *Italian Orange Cake, Flourless Chocolate Torte, mango Bread Pudding w/ Caramel Sauce, Chocolate Azteca Cake (Decadent Chocolate Cake made w/ sweet Mexican Chocolate & Ancho chili powder, Pastel de Tres leches. **P1,500**

February 24 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. –4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **PAELLA Y MAS (Paellas & More!) by: Chef Ed Quimson,** is a seasoned master chef of Spanish origin, creator of Chef Ed's Restaurant at Salcedo Village, Makati City and his latest restaurant FILOS at The Fort, Makati City. He has also lent his expertise to such restaurants as La Tasca, Via Mare, The Nielsen Tower, the Member's Lounge of the Phil. Stock Exchange & the Subic Yacht Club. **Demonstration with student participation. P2,500**

February 25 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. –4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **NEW CLASS! THE BEST OF THE BEST SERIES III by: Chef Vicky Villanueva,** from Stars & Bizu, let Chef Vicky share with you her wealth of knowledge and experience of patisseries and restaurant concepts, skills, techniques & operationsChocolate is always in fashion! This sessions opens new opportunities for you to enjoy and learn making fabulous bakeshop specialties. Create your signature desserts! Establish the WOW factor in your creations by classic and modern techniques. Chef Vicki will show you hot to decorate using chocolate, nougatine, marble cut outs. White chocolate Strawberry Cheesecake, Chocolate Roulade, Concorde Cake, White Choco Cashew Meringue, Black and White Cake, Shiny Chocolate Glaze, and Toffee Tart w/ Chocolate Crust. **P2,500**

February 27 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) **NEW CLASS! THE BEST OF THE BEST SERIES IV by: Chef Vicky** VillanuevaMacaroons and BarsLearn to create new flavors, profitable, fabulous cookies. Secrets, tricks and recipes revealed in making the smooth, round macaroons, the fudgiest and chewy bars. Turtle squares Butterscotch Walnut bars, Super Fudgy Chocolate brownies, Macaroons – Green Tea, Ube, Black and White Sesame Seed and Caramel. **P2,500**

February 27 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) **NEW CLASS! THE BEST OF THE BEST SERIES III by: Chef Vicky Villanueva,** from Stars & Bizu, let Chef Vicky share with you her wealth of knowledge and experience of patisseries and restaurant concepts, skills, techniques & operations Chocolate is always in fashion! This sessions opens new opportunities for you to enjoy and learn making fabulous bakeshop specialties. Create your signature desserts! Establish the WOW factor in your creations by classic and modern techniques. Chef Vicki will show you hot to decorate using chocolate, nougatine, marble cut outs. White chocolate Strawberry Cheesecake, Chocolate Roulade, Concorde Cake, White Choco Cashew Meringue, Black and White Cake, Shiny Chocolate Glaze, and Toffee Tart w/ Chocolate Crust. **P2,500**

February 28 (Tuesday) 10:00 .m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) **HEALTHY GOURMET COOKING SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE I by: Jacqueline Haessig Alleje,** owner of Rizal Dairy Farm, Swiss-Pinoy restaurateur (Vieux Chalet Swiss restaurant), organic caterer and food consultant (Petra's naturally green, global, gourmet) **Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. P2,800**

TUITION FEE includes ingredients. Reservation is required.
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Gold
DAIRY ICE CREAM
PRESTO-AVOSET GROUP

5-day mall fair on culinary trends

THE COUNTRY'S TOP FOOD EXPERTS WILL share the latest information in Culinary Trends 2006 on Jan. 24-28 at SM Southmall activity center.

A project of the Le Cordon Bleu Manille (LCBM) Arts Management Association of the Philippines, with support from SM Southmall and the Culinary Art Foundation of the Philippines, the fair aims to promote Philippine cuisine internationally.

Hotel and Restaurant Management students, budding entrepreneurs, cooking aficionados, homemakers and hobbyists are invited to join in the activity free of charge.

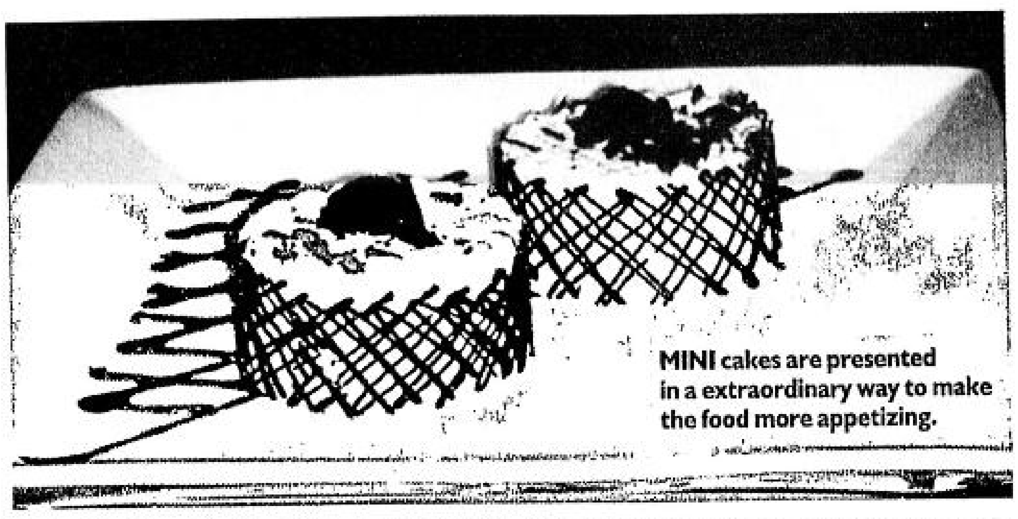
The centerpiece of the event is the Culinary Theater, a mobile classroom that aims to promote culinary education developed for the new era.

Big food establishments, top culinary personalities and master chefs will be participating in the Culinary Theater's five-day run. Chef Billy King will give a lecture about the food industry and discuss the Food Trends for 2006 on Jan. 24. Imelda Silayan, a kitchen design consultant, will discuss the latest kitchen designs and equipment on Jan. 26, while Dr. Conrado Dayrit, virgin coconut oil researcher, will talk about the product and how it helps our body on Jan. 28.

The Culinary Theater will also showcase a food theater featuring different dishes from some of Manila's top restaurants, as well as a speed skills demo by some of the students of Le Cordon Bleu Manille. Other events to look out for are the Food Bazaar and Flaming Fried Ice Cream Tasting Event.

Le Cordon Bleu Manille started more than 50 years ago when Pat Limjuco Dayrit became the first Filipino to receive the prestigious Grand Diplome in the legendary French school Le Cordon Bleu. Upon her return in 1948, she opened a culinary training center for young homemakers and food enthusiasts, calling it Le Cordon Bleu Manille.

Since that time, LCBM has educated thousands and graduated many of the country's top chefs and entrepreneurs.


MINI cakes are presented in a extraordinary way to make the food more appetizing.

LE CORDON Bleu Manille's students doing their cooking demonstrations

Perfect Paella

From page C1

Millo, author of Gastronomia dela Comunidad Valenciana, Legislacion Alimentaria Española and La Paella. Soler argued:

"Accepting that paella, the Spanish national dish, is the subject of furious controversy and disparate points of view that may never be resolved insofar as ingredients and methods are concerned, our paella adheres to what is considered the most orthodox, traditional and classical schemes as championed by the best authorities in Spanish cuisine.

"Following these advocacies and in line with the practice among paella purists, paella is devoid of any tomato sauce or tomato paste. Only a minuscule amount (one small piece for 15 servings) of fresh tomatoes, peeled, pitted and minced, are introduced; and this only in the initial sautéing to balance the sauté's acidity."

Soler insisted the base of paella should only be oil (not necessarily but preferably olive oil) enhanced by saffron and the flavors of all the other ingredients which have been previously fried or sautéed in it.

While he would not share how he cooks his paella, he stresses that rice is its fundamental ingredient and that this is introduced dry into the oil so that it will have maximum absorbency to soak in the flavors that the oil has previously imbibed from the different ingredients. Water is introduced after—to let the rice cook properly.

"You know it's a great paella when you can taste all its flavors in one grain of rice," he said.

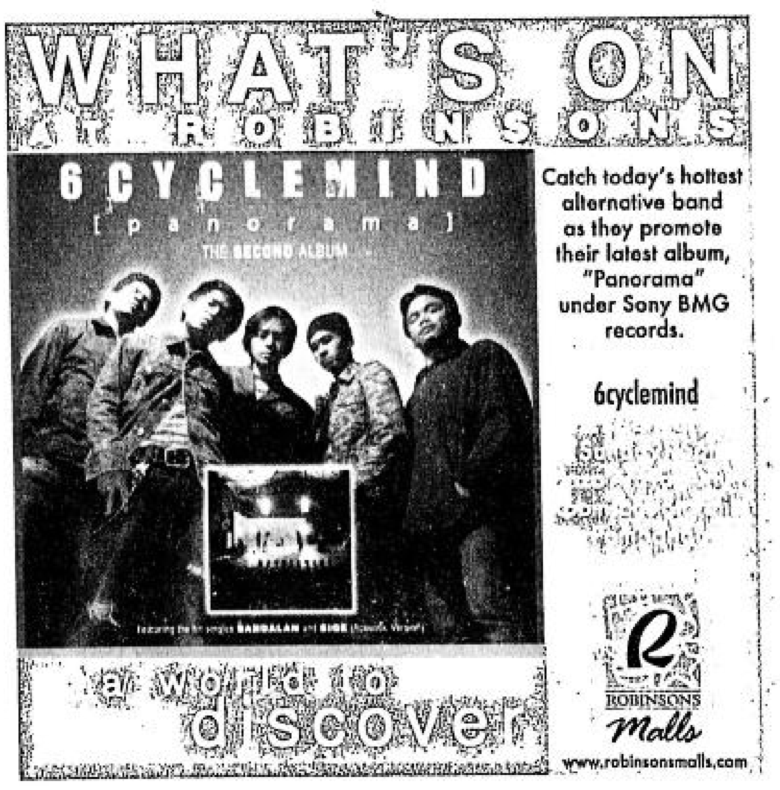
Tomatoes or no tomatoes, to agree or disagree, that is entirely up to you. One thing I must admit, though—it sure was a terrific evening capped with a lusciously sweet glass of Licor de Crema Catalana (Cream Liqueur, a take-off from the famous dessert Crema Catalana, a light hybrid between crème brûlée and *leche flan*. Someone came up with the idea that the dessert could be turned into a liqueur and he was right. Another must!)

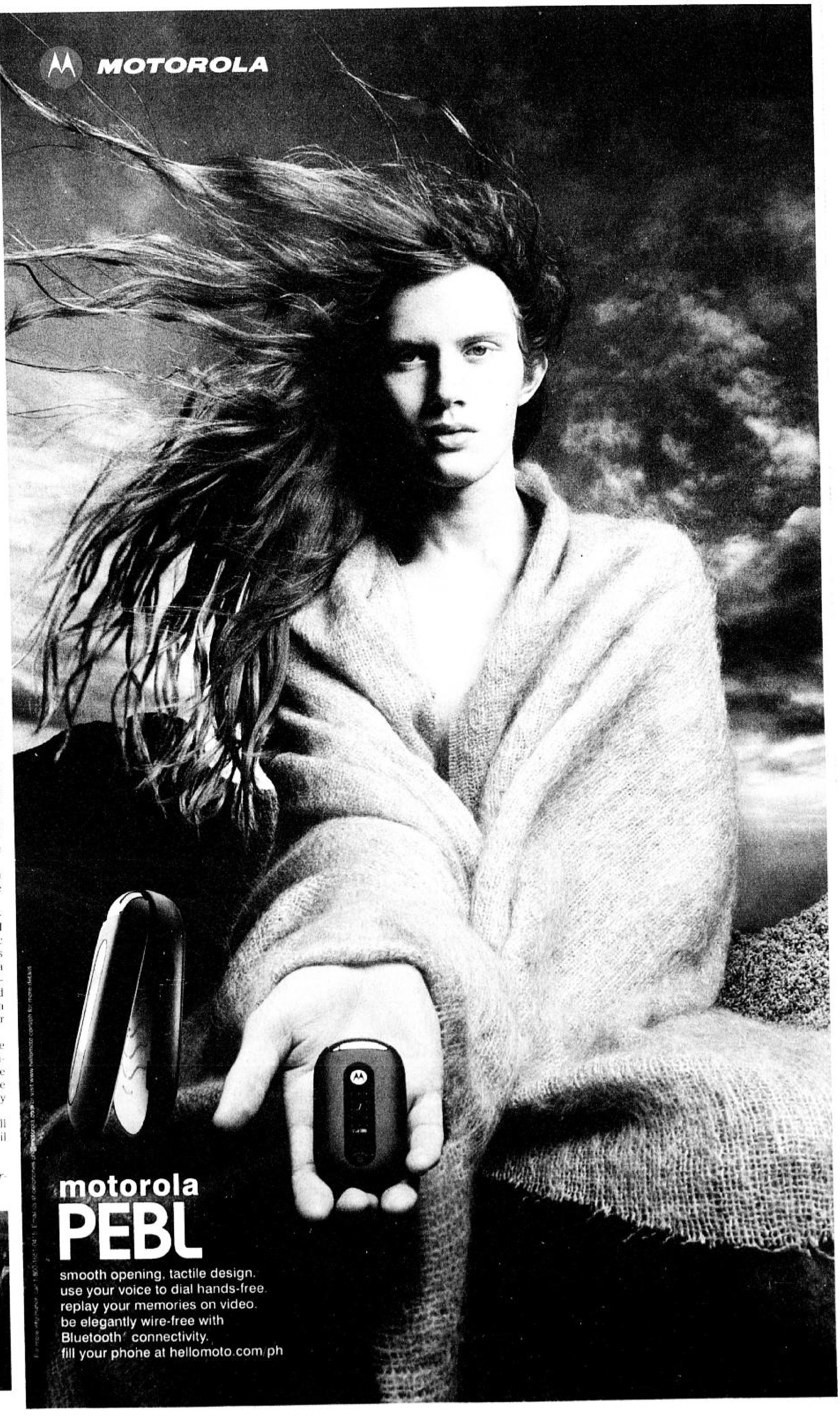
Tito Rick, for a genius, you're a joy to have around and spending time with you is perennial bliss as well as great opportunity for me to learn, discuss and even disagree. You are truly one ingredient that makes life, healthy and wonderfully wealthy!

For reservations, franchise or deliveries call 6362963, 6401845, 0917-5217500 or elmail seissabores@gmail.com

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

DINING nook at Seis Sabores

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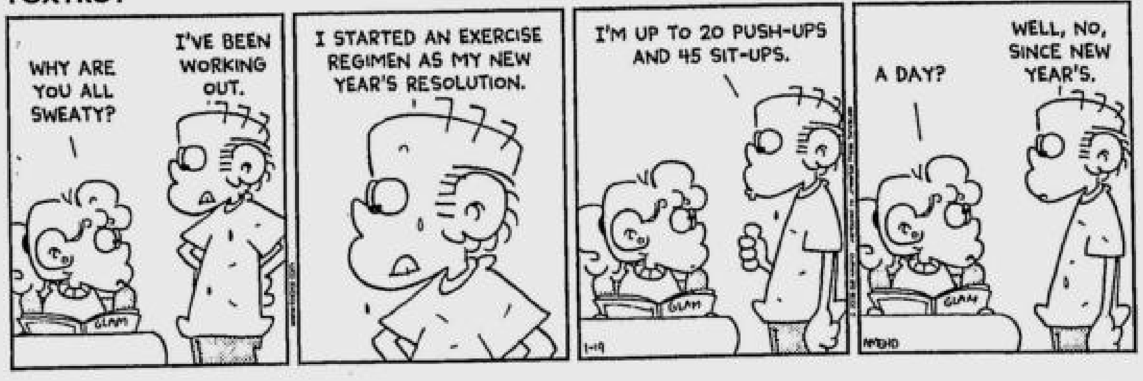
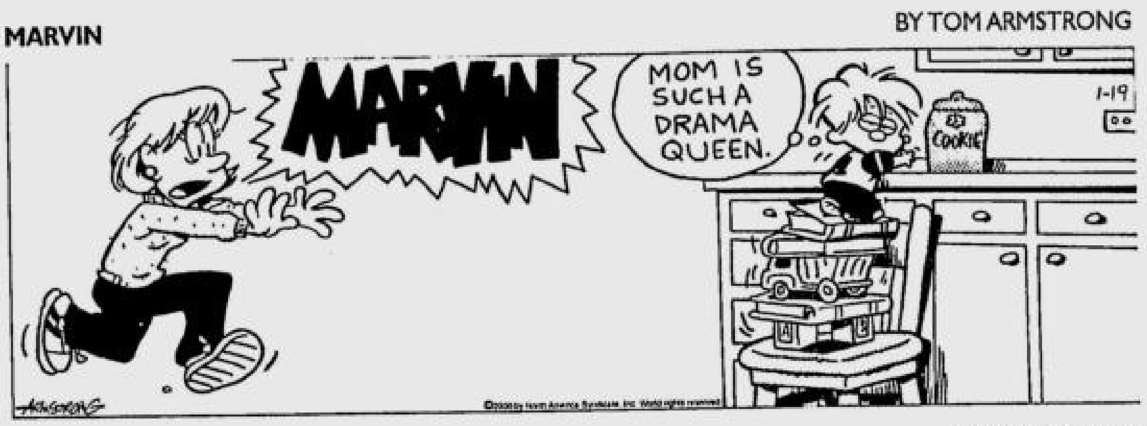
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHY ARE YOU ALL SWEATY?
I'VE BEEN WORKING OUT.
I STARTED AN EXERCISE REGIMEN AS MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION.
I'M UP TO 20 PUSH-UPS AND 45 SIT-UPS.
A DAY?
WELL, NO, SINCE NEW YEAR'S.
GLAM
1-19
AMEND

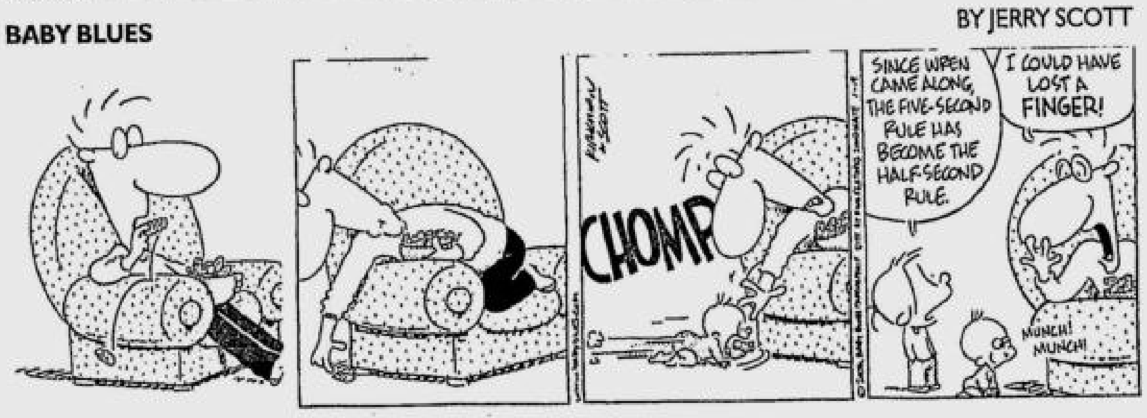
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


MARVIN
MOM IS SUCH A DRAMA QUEEN.
COOKIE
1-19
ARMSTRONG

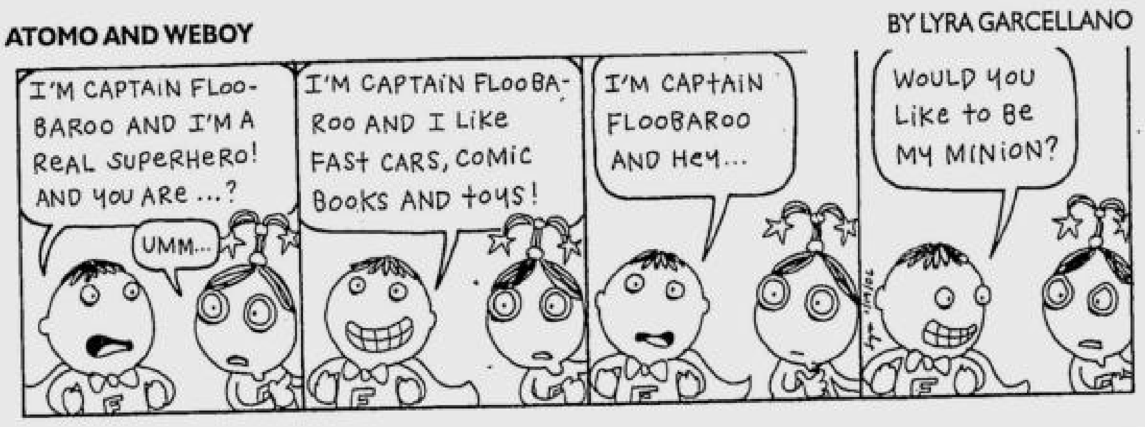
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


KIRKMAN & SCOTT
CHOMP
SINCE WREN CAME ALONG, THE FIVE-SECOND RULE HAS BECOME THE HALF-SECOND RULE.
I COULD HAVE LOST A FINGER!
MUNCH! MUNCH!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'M CAPTAIN FLOOBAROO AND I'M A REAL SUPERHERO! AND YOU ARE ...?
UMM...
I'M CAPTAIN FLOOBAROO AND I LIKE FAST CARS, COMIC BOOKS AND TOYS!
I'M CAPTAIN FLOOBAROO AND HEY...
WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE MY MINION?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're highly creative. Whatever you do, you do with flair. Because of this, people admire you. Your forceful style of expression and your bold ideas magnetize people to you. Consequently, you have a lot of power and influence. Exciting new beginnings are possible this year. Keep an open mind. Be ready to jump in either direction.

Birthdate of: Dolly Parton, singer/actress; Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee; Janis Joplin, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Get ready for a popular four to six weeks ahead. People want to see your face! Enjoy good times with friends, clubs, organizations and professional associations.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): The Sun is slowly moving across the top of your chart. When it's at high noon like this, it calls attention to you. It's like a spotlight on you!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today the Sun moves into Aquarius, your fellow air sign. This is a lovely benefit for the next four weeks! Opportunities to travel, study and explore publishing and the media will come your way.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): It's time to focus on debt, bills, shared property and insurance matters. In the next few weeks, try to clean up loose details in these areas.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Today the Sun moves opposite your sign. This is a good chance for you to learn more about your style of relating to others. They'll act like a mirror for you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): In the next month, work hard to get organized both at home and at work. For whatever reason, you know it's time to pull your act together so that you can take it on the road.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): What a fun-filled, creative, entertaining month ahead you have to look forward to! This is a wonderful time to go on vacation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You can expect to deal with home, family and domestic issues more than usual now. Perhaps a parent will be in your life more than usual?

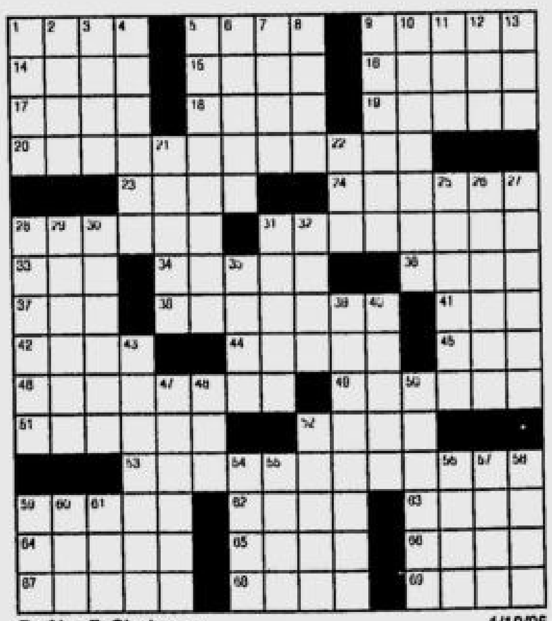
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): In the next few weeks, you'll be busy running errands, talking to siblings, buying and selling, and reading, writing and studying more. Busy you!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): As the Sun changes signs today, it shifts your awareness to how you earn a living, what you spend your money on, and what you really value in life. (Something to think about.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today the Sun enters your sign for the next four weeks. This means it's your turn to recharge your batteries for the rest of the year!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You need to lie low and take it easy. Work alone or behind the scenes if you can. This is a time of quiet preparation, rest and relaxation.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
1/19/06

ACROSS
1 Mata __
5 Alone
9 Flowed out
14 Actress Gray
15 4-string guitars
16 Padres and Pirates, briefly
17 Play parts
18 Dawn Chong and Carruth
19 Blow one's own horn
20 Start of Evan Esar quote
23 Clark Kent's gal
24 Set up tents
28 Derrick for loading
31 Part 2 of quote
33 Born as
34 Computer data format
36 Sound from a pound
37 Above, in an ode
38 Part 3 of quote
41 Nabokov novel
42 Elevator name
44 Steel plow pioneer
45 Still
46 Part 4 of quote
49 Withdraw
51 Pancho's poncho
52 Charged particles
53 End of quote
59 Open courtyards
62 Icelandic literary work
63 Seed cover
64 Counter
65 Observed
66 Radiation units
67 Weather conditions
68 Printed matter
69 Gandolfo resident

DOWN
1 Miami pros
2 St. Louis skyline feature
3 Religious custom
4 Shoe part
5 Most gruff
6 Gives the nod to
7 A Cobb
8 __ buco
9 Sitting, as a court
10 Blemished
11 Actress Arthur
12 Bitter vetch
13 Spring forward syst.
21 Stellar blasts
22 "__ Mir Bist Du Shoen"
25 Nautical affirmative
26 Formed
27 Develop from larvae
28 Noses
29 Cut molars
30 More strange
31 Cables
32 Cultural historian Shere
35 Muslim magistrate
39 Haughty
40 "Lovergirl" singer Marie
43 Concert site
47 Narcotic
48 Cribbage item
50 D-flat, in other words
52 Looker-upper's guide
54 Tale in verse
55 __ fixe
56 Black-and-white cookie
57 Walk lamely
58 Otherwise
59 Circle part
60 Part of AT&T
61 Slugger's stat

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

R	S	V	P	■	E	R	R	O	R	■	A	P	E	X
U	T	E	S	■	M	A	U	V	E	■	R	I	P	E
N	O	R	A	■	O	R	I	E	L	■	G	L	E	N
T	A	B	L	E	T	E	N	N	I	S	■	L	E	A
■	■	■	M	X	I	■	■	S	C	H	M	O	■	■
O	P	S	■	A	C	E	S	■	S	E	A	W	A	Y
B	E	H	E	M	O	T	H	■	■	B	O	C	C	E
I	D	O	L	■	N	E	A	T	H	■	R	A	T	A
T	A	P	E	D	■	■	P	R	O	M	I	S	E	S
S	L	A	V	I	C	■	E	I	R	E	■	E	D	T
■	■	■	R	E	E	L	S	■	■	S	T	S	■	■
Z	O	O	■	D	O	U	B	L	E	S	T	E	A	L
E	M	U	S	■	S	P	O	O	F	■	A	T	C	O
T	E	N	T	■	E	R	R	O	L	■	T	A	L	K
A	N	D	Y	■	D	A	N	N	Y	■	E	T	U	I

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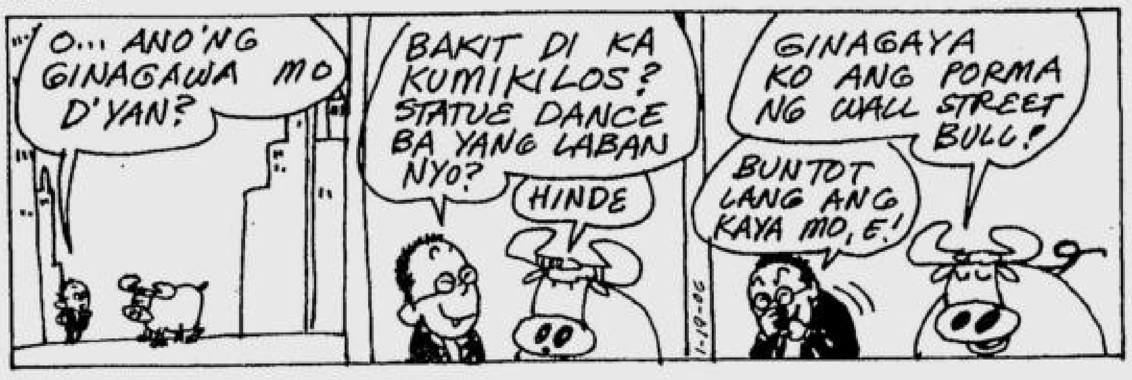
1/18/06

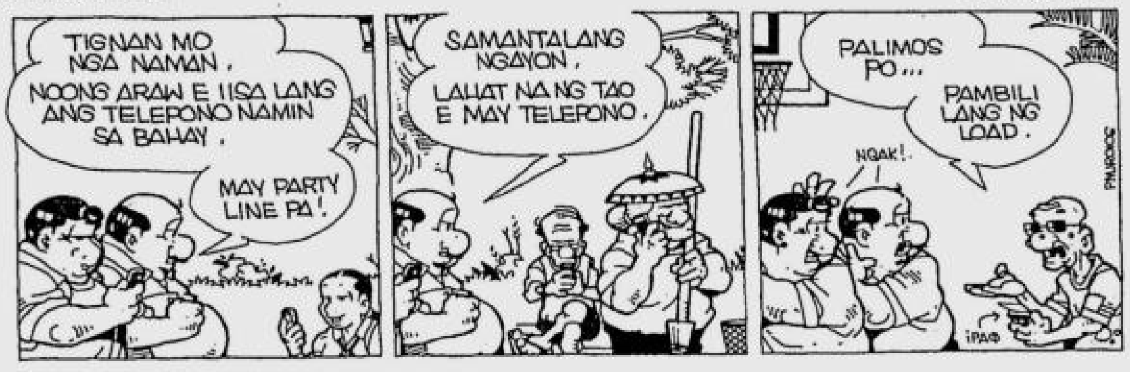
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


O... ANO'NG GINAGAWA MO D'YAN?
BAKIT DI KA KUMIKILOS? STATUE DANCE BA YANG LABAN NYO?
HINDE
1-19-06
GINAGAYA KO ANG PORMA NG WALL STREET BULL!
BUNTOT LANG ANG KAYA MO, E!

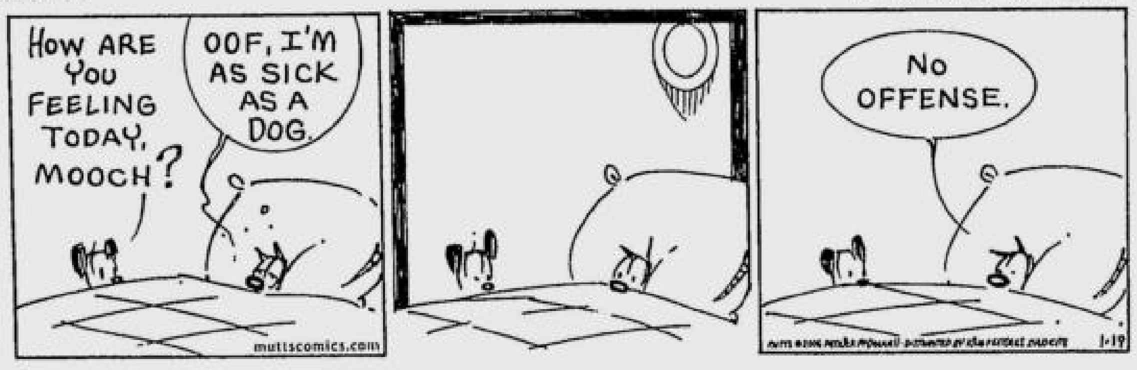
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


TIGNAN MO NGA NAMAN. NOONG ARAW E IISA LANG ANG TELEPONO NAMIN SA BAHAY.
MAY PARTY LINE PA!
SAMANTALANG NGAYON, LAHAT NA NG TAO E MAY TELEPONO.
PALIMOS PO...
PAMBILI LANG NG LOAD.
NGAK!
iPAQ
PMJR

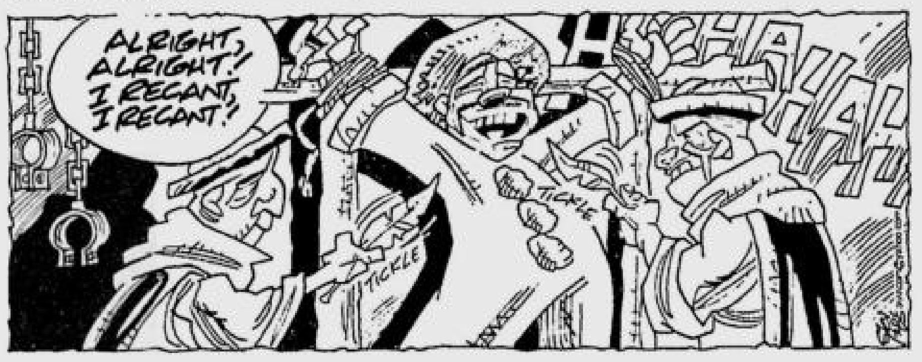
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY, MOOCH?
OOF, I'M AS SICK AS A DOG.
No OFFENSE.
muttscomics.com
1-19

DIVINE COMEDY

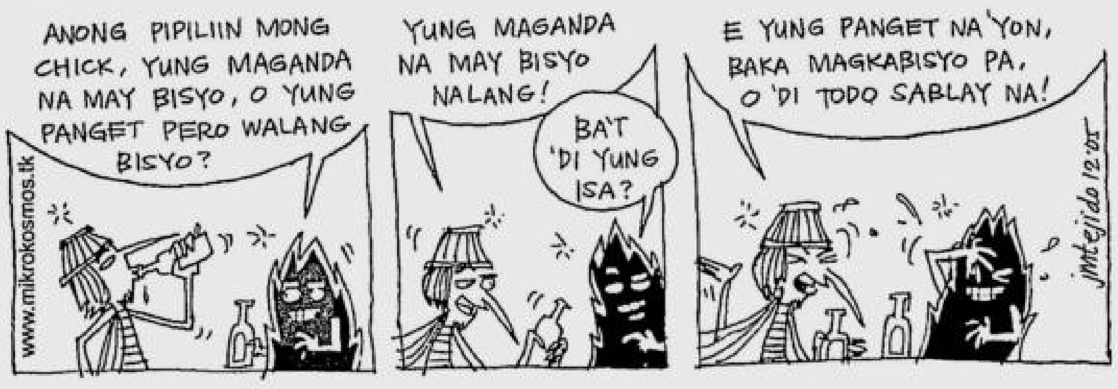
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT! I RECANT, I RECANT!
TICKLE
TICKLE
HA HA HA

THE INQUISITION OF GONZO, THE HERETIC CLOWN

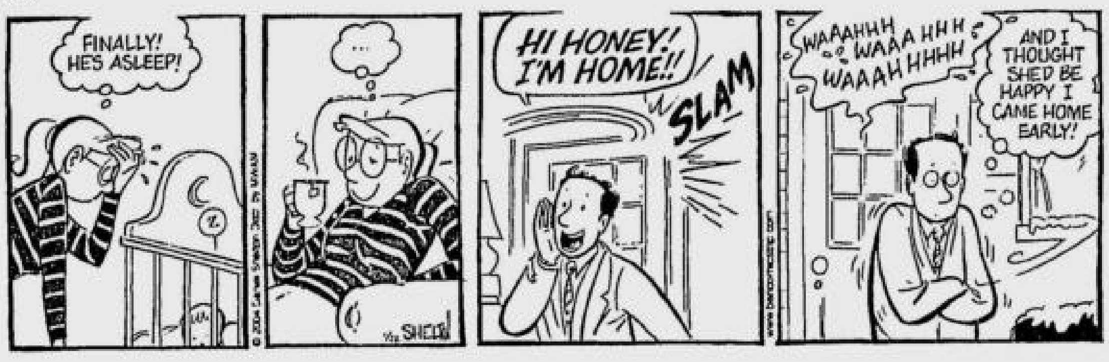
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANONG PIPILIIN MONG CHICK, YUNG MAGANDA NA MAY BISYO, O YUNG PANGET PERO WALANG BISYO?
www.mikrokosmos.tk
YUNG MAGANDA NA MAY BISYO NALANG!
BA'T 'DI YUNG ISA?
E YUNG PANGET NA 'YON, BAKA MAGKABISYO PA, O 'DI TODO SABLAY NA!
jmtejido 12'05

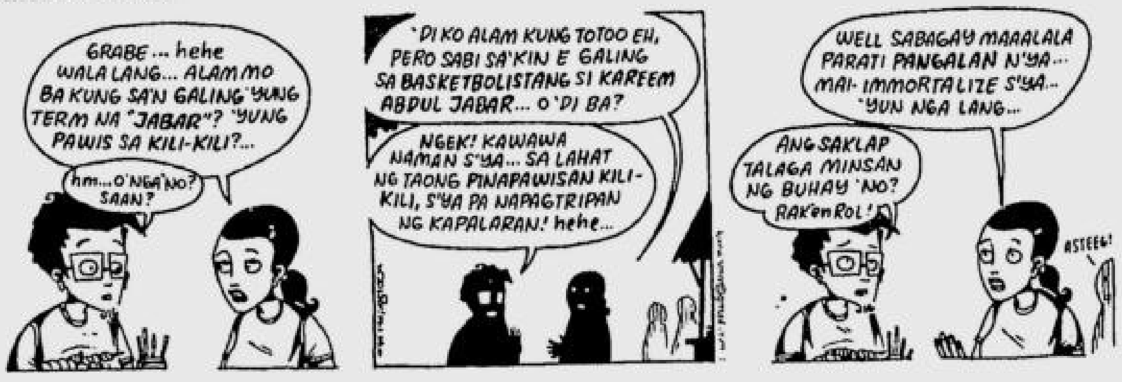
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


FINALLY! HE'S ASLEEP!
...
HI HONEY! I'M HOME!!
SLAM
WAAAHHH WAAAHHH WAAAHHHH
AND I THOUGHT SHE'D BE HAPPY I CAME HOME EARLY!

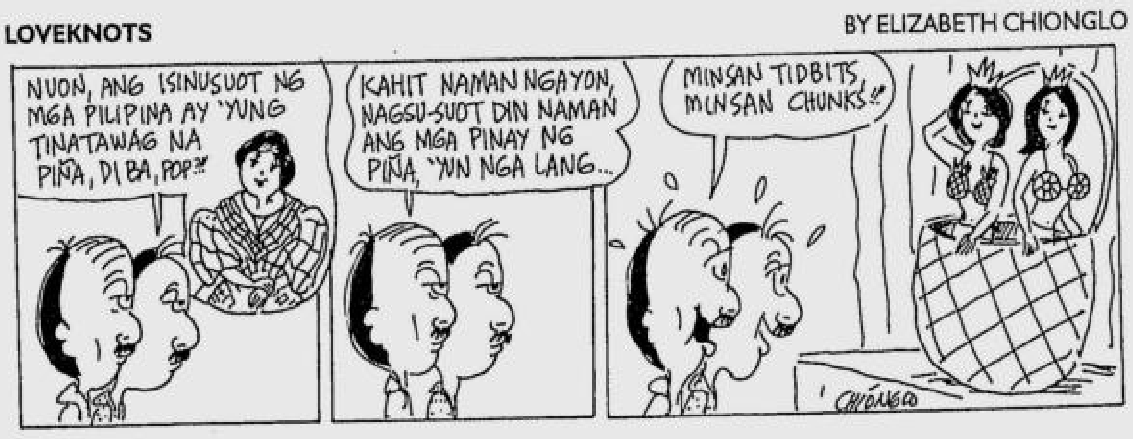
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


GRABE ... hehe WALA LANG... ALAM MO BA KUNG SA'N GALING 'YUNG TERM NA "JABAR"? 'YUNG PAWIS SA KILI-KILI?...
hm...O NGA NO? SAAN?
'DI KO ALAM KUNG TOTOO EH, PERO SABI SA'KIN E GALING SA BASKETBOLISTANG SI KAREEM ABDUL JABAR... O 'DI BA?
NGEK! KAWAWA NAMAN S'YA... SA LAHAT NG TAONG PINAPAWISAN KILI-KILI, S'YA PA NAPAGTRIPAN NG KAPALARAN! hehe...
WELL SABAGAY MAAALALA PARATI PANGALAN N'YA... MAI-IMMORTALIZE S'YA... 'YUN NGA LANG...
ANG SAKLAP TALAGA MINSAN NG BUHAY 'NO? RAK'en ROL!
ASTEEG!

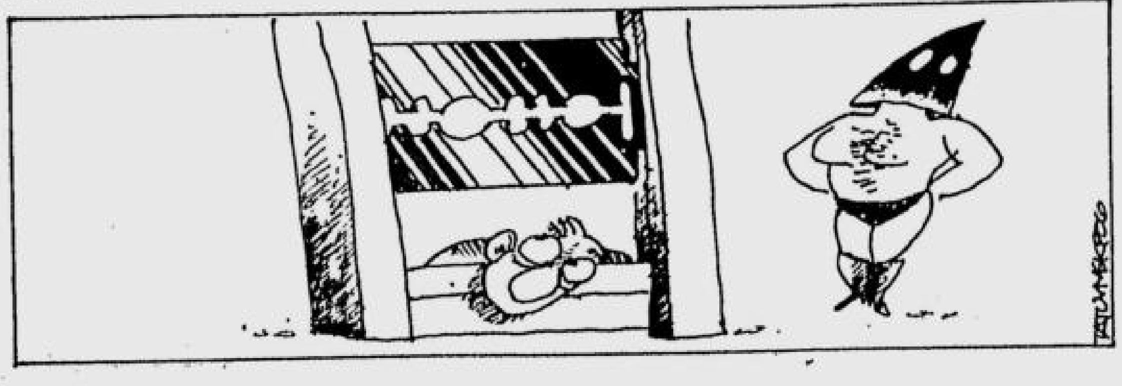
LOVEKNOTS

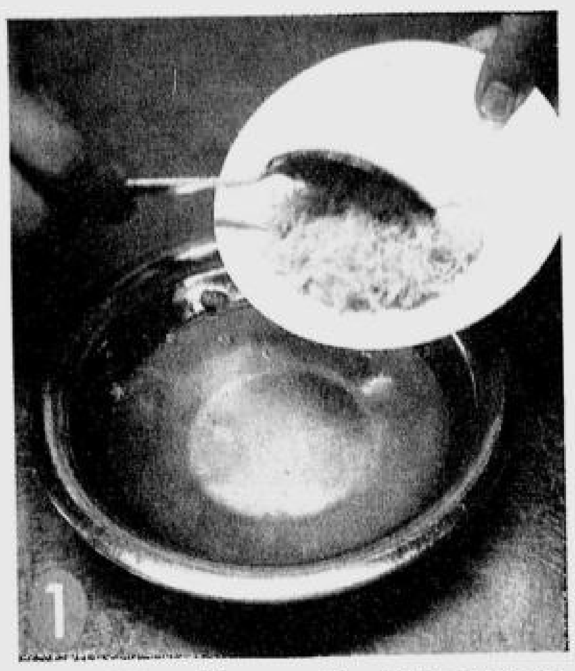
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NUON, ANG ISINUSUOT NG MGA PILIPINA AY 'YUNG TINATAWAG NA PIÑA, DI BA, POP?
KAHIT NAMAN NGAYON, NAGSU-SUOT DIN NAMAN ANG MGA PINAY NG PIÑA, 'YUN NGA LANG...
MINSAN TIDBITS, MINSAN CHUNKS!
CHIONGLO

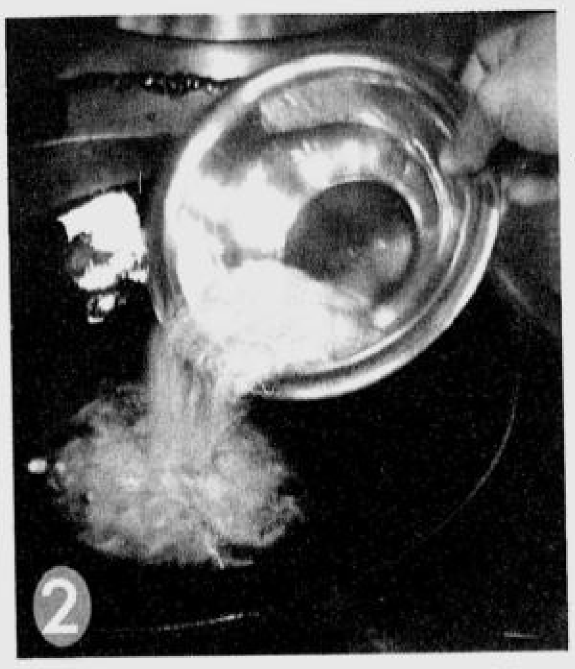
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

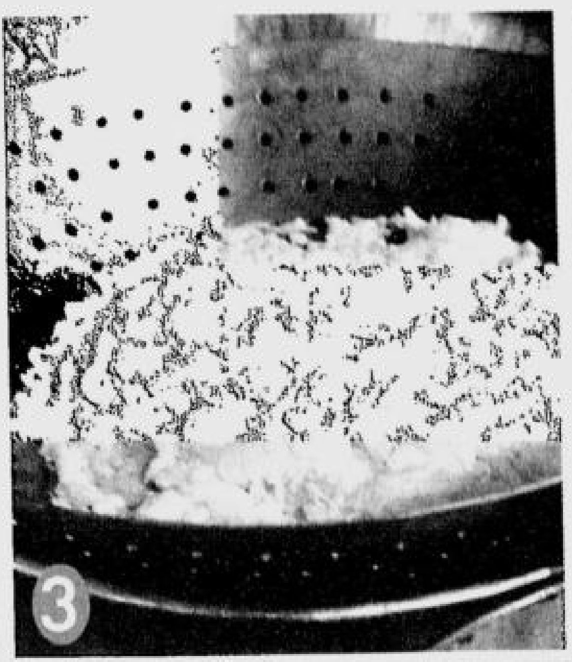

TATUMMBPPG



IN A BOWL, combine egg white, dried scallops and fish. Mix well.



HEAT oil and pour the egg white mixture, stirring continuously with a whisk to keep it from coagulating. Stir till it's 70 percent cooked.



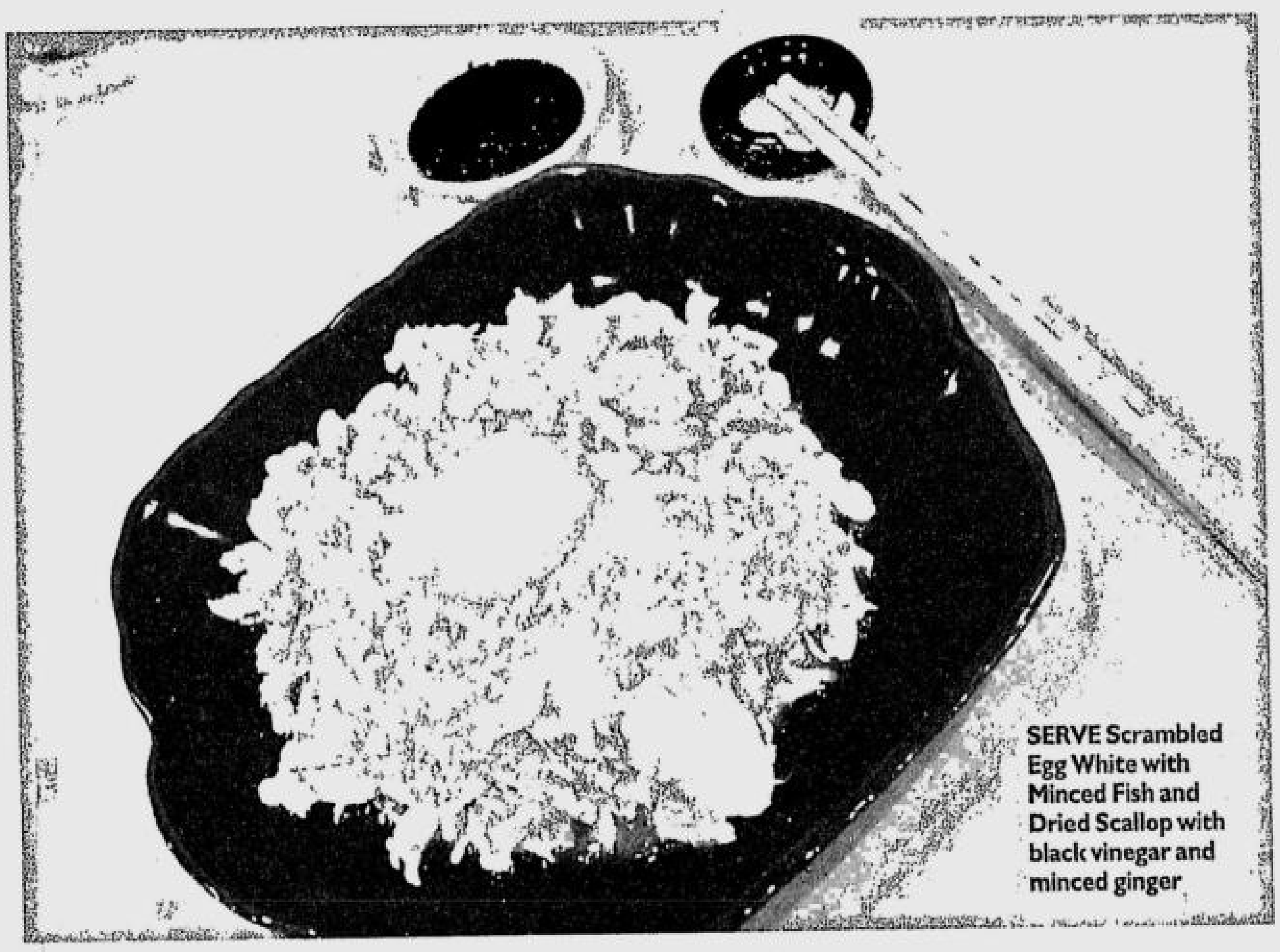
STRAIN and set aside.

IN ANOTHER pan, heat 1 tbsp oil. Add ginger, chicken stock, wine, salt, chicken powder, sugar and cornstarch. Stir well to thicken the mixture. Then add the egg white mixture. Transfer into a platter.

Something so right and light after the holidays

TOP with raw egg yolk.

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio



SERVE Scrambled Egg White with Minced Fish and Dried Scallop with black vinegar and minced ginger

AFTER the big meals and rich treats during the holiday season, don't you just want to eat something light yet tasty and easy to do at home?

Scrambled Egg White with Minced Fish and Dried Scallop is one dish we can suggest. This Chinese recipe is easy to prepare and requires only a few ingredients, mainly egg whites.

In Chinese cooking, eggs are used quite often like to make rice noodles, to add flavor and texture to soups, to make fried rice almost a meal in itself.

Scrambled Egg White with Minced Fish and Dried Scallop has a luxuriously rich texture, but is quite low in calories.

Dried scallop and shredded fish fillet are added primarily to enhance the flavor of this egg dish. The fillet may be sole or *lapu-lapu*.

When mixed and eaten with Chinese black vinegar, the egg dish surprisingly acquires a taste that is almost similar to crab meat. "If you also crave for seafood, this dish does the trick," says Jacquiline Lee, Peking Garden dining manager.

"You can eat scrambled egg as is, if you want it plain and simple, but if you long for lobster meat or crab meat, simply mix in the black vinegar with minced ginger," says Lee.

Black vinegar is a dark complex vinegar made of glutinous rice and malt. It is somewhat similar to a balsamic used in Chinese stir-fries, braises and sauces. Black vinegar is available in most Chinese stores and some supermarkets.

Scrambled Egg White with Minced Fish and Dried Scallop is one of the bestsellers at Peking Garden, 2/L, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City (tel. 8179066/67). Peking Garden is an affiliate of Maxim's Hong Kong.

STEP BY STEP

300 g (6 pcs) egg white
50 g shredded fish (sole fillet)
30 dried scallops
50 g chicken soup stock
A pinch of minced ginger, salt, sugar
1 tsp chicken powder
1 tbsp cornstarch dissolved in 3 tsp water
2 tsp Chinese yellow wine (Shaohsing)
1 pc raw egg yolk
1 c oil
Chinese black vinegar

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbuga@inquirer.com.ph

Heart-friendly pizzas

DINING OUT

CALIFORNIA PIZZA KITCHEN (CPK) is now offering dishes that are 99-percent free of trans fat, which can contribute to heart problems. CPK uses only heart-friendly oils like canola, sesame and extra-virgin olive oil. CPK has over 26 gourmet pizzas and 12 pastas, in addition to appetizers, soups, salads, sandwiches and desserts. It has branches in Glorietta 3, Ayala Center, Makati; Corte de las Palmas, Alabang Town Center; 2/F, Bridgeway Shangri-La Mall; and Bellagio Square, Tomas Morato. The new CPK quick-service restaurant has opened at Promenade Greenhills.

PAN-FRIED Cod Fish with Yam in Star Anise Sauce. Mandarin Oriental's Tin Hau offers "The Best of Beijing," Jan. 28-Feb. 12, prepared by guest chefs Qi Peng Tao Andy and Ma Meng Nick.

JAYMI'S GRILL offers well-loved Filipino food. Bestsellers are *sisig* and crispy *pata*. Those who want to eat healthy can choose from several grilled dishes. The restaurant uses only the freshest seafood. Prices are reasonable. Seafood dishes cost P150-P300, while combos do not exceed P400 each. Mango Freeze for dessert costs P99. Jaymi's Grill is also an ideal venue for get-togethers of families, friends or colleagues. The restaurant caters to all tastes. Jaymi's Grill is at Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. It also has an outlet in Waltermart, Pasong Tamo, Makati. Call 8872709/8872741.

MAKATI SHANGRI-LA'S Shang Palace offers a special a la carte menu in celebration of the Chinese New Year. The menu consists of *tikoy*, dim sum and specialties like Braised Pork Trotter with Black Mushrooms and Vegetables, Salmon Head with Ginger and Scallions in a Clay Pot, Combination of Crispy Milk and Spicy Salt Cuttlefish, among others. Call 8400884 or 8138888 local 7588 or 7599. The classic Chinese *tikoy* will be available at the hotel's main lobby until Jan. 29. For bulk orders of *tikoy* boxes, call 8400884.

MANDARIN Oriental's Tivoli offers a taste of Australia, dubbed "Tasting South Australia" from Jan. 23-Feb. 5. Epicureans will be treated to fine South Australian food also known as "tucker," which will be prepared in a variety of ways by the Tivoli's innovative culinary team. Dishes include Goat Cheese Soufflé with Rocket Lettuce and Red Bell Pepper Coulis, Venison Carpaccio with Marinated Chanterelle Mushrooms and Truffle Oil Drizzle, Barrossa Valley Duck Consomme, Grilled Wagyu Beef Tenderloin on Ragout of Salsify and Green Asparagus and Parsley Gnocchi, and Fig Tart Tatin with Mascarpone ice cream. Available for lunch on weekdays and at dinner daily, in a special a la carte menu. Call 7508888 local 2431 to 2433.

LITTLE ASIA has opened a branch on 2/F, The Promenade, Greenhills. The restaurant has new dishes like Vietnamese Crispy Chicken Wings with Garlic and Vietnamese Beef Cubes with Tomatoes. Bestsellers include Salt and Pepper Frogs Legs, Sizzling Balut, Velvet Prawns with Caramelized Nuts, Thai Chicken Barbecue, Dotted Chicken and Crispy Chicken. Desserts include Caramel Mango Tower and Crepe Samurai. Little Asia is at Tomas Morato cor. Scout Funtabella Streets in Quezon City, call 3730609 and 4104937; and 2/L, The Promenade, Greenhills, call 7275265 and 7275785.

FUZION SMOOTHIE CAFÉ offers South Beach Grilled Specialities and Smoothies with no added ice and sugar for a filling, satisfying yet guilt-free meal or *merienda*. Fuzion's South Beach Grilled Specialties include Herb-Smothered Pork Chop, Southwestern Spicy Pork Chop, Classic Pork Chop and Cajun Smoked Chicken—all served with organic Mexican brown rice. Drinks include What's Up Doc, a blend of carrots, orange and banana while Pink Me Up combines pomelo, lime and banana. Orange and pineapple make up Coldbuster while papaya, peach and pineapple are used in Papa Don't Peach. Other Fuzion favorites are Very Berry Good, Strawberry Teaser, and Flamango. Fuzion Smoothie Café is on Tomas Morato Avenue; Citywalk in Eastwood, Libis; Rodeo Drive in Robinsons Galleria; Podium; Greenhills Promenade; Greenbelt 3; and soon, Mall of Asia.

CPK'S original BBQ Chicken Chopped has chopped lettuce, black beans, sweet corn, jicama, cilantro, basil, crispy corn tortilla chips and Monterey Jack cheese tossed together in our herb ranch dressing. Topped with chopped BBQ chicken breast, diced tomatoes and scallions

TIA MARIA'S offers Delicious Enchiladas—two fresh tortillas with choice fillings of beef or chicken smothered in Ranchero sauce, served with Mexican rice, and topped with cheese and sour cream.

Feedback from foodies and homesick Pinoys

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

HAVING MY E-MAIL ADDRESS AVAILABLE to all readers exposes me to spammers. But that's endurable when there are responses from readers who inform me about (1) what they ate, (2) what they want to eat, (3) where to get the best food and drink.

Writing from Kyoto, Japan, Vincent Tan's recollection traveled all the way to Zamboanga City to tell me of the best sate he has tasted.

"Was the sate you wrote about in your article the red, soupy one with little sticks of barbecued meat? If it is, a Joloano friend told me that the best sate (at least the ones sold in Muslim restaurants or *kaddais*) can now be found in Zamboanga City. The good sate cooks in Jolo didn't want to go back even after the fighting in the island province in the '70's subsided. When I went to Jolo about two years ago, I tried sate (or *satti* as we call it in Zamboanga) in a *kaddai*, and I have to admit, the ones in Zamboanga are indeed better. I recommend Rainbow Kitchenette. The place isn't much to look at but the sate tastes great. And I assure you, you'll sweat your head off."

***PUSO* vendor in Cebu posing by her mobile shop**

Yes, Vincent, the sate is the soupy red one. My guides in Zamboanga brought me to Morning Glory, so named probably because it's only open in the morning. I was advised not to wear white because if that red sauce splatters, it's goodbye to your whites. The sate or *satti* are super-thin slices skewered on coconut midribs, the handheld part resting on the edge of the red sauce soup bowl. One *puso* (rice cooked in heart-shaped woven coconut leaves) is included in each order. One is supposed to place some of the *puso* into the sauce, have one piece of the sate and then take it with a piece of the *puso* scooped out of the red sauce.

But, yes, I will try Rainbow Kitchenette next time.

Local wine

For the piece on local wines, there were many inquiries on where to buy these. There seems to be no specific shops but Patubas Corporation sent its e-mail and contact numbers: gvamgmnt@info.com.ph, (632) 5466783, (632) 8257308.

Robert Allana forgot the name of a wine from La Union with a painting or illustration on its label, though he heard that it's from Naguilian.

I haven't seen that wine but when we were at the Naguilian *basi*-maker, our food tour group joked that in case we marketed the *basi*, it would be called Chateau Lioac after the town in Naguilian. Maybe someone heard us and decided to appropriate the name.

Daniel Dulnuan wrote about how I missed out on the fruit wines of the Cordilleras, particularly of Bauko, Mountain Province. He did say that he's a dealer for his uncle who produces those wines, branded it "Salome" and enumerated the available flavors. There is cherry, though he didn't say exactly what the local name for the fruit is. There is *bugnay*, which is how *bignay* is called in the Cordilleras, and he explained that it's a wildberry and "a favorite with tourists." There is roselle that is made from cacao. Apart from the fruit wines, he also provides the Cordillera rice wine, *tapuey*.

I texted the number he provided and was told to call a landline and look for Julien. Turned out to be Dulnuan's mother, who told me how her son decided to help promote the local wines of Baukö. She said the wines have a Bureau of Food and Drug certification. And that apart from those her son mentioned, lemon and persimmon wines are also available.

A 750-ml bottle is sold for P175. For three bottles, the discounted price is P500. Call 9315298 and 0915-4353946, or e-mail dulnuan2000@yahoo.com

Missing 'lechon'

The piece on *lechon* spurred Bob Chiong to e-mail me about the best *lechon* near his hometown. He claims it's better than even all the other *lechon* he has tried throughout the country. He suggests checking out Nomer's Lechon in case I visit Ozamis City, Misamis Occidental. He doesn't mind that it takes him an hour to travel from his home to buy the *lechon* in the city.

Reading about *lechon* made some overseas Filipinos homesick. Alex Jimenez, who resides in Maine, USA, wrote this missive: "When you are on overtime (about 7 p.m.), no food under your desk and you are in a faraway land… you cannot say, 'I will try it when I get home tonight.' I miss home dearly!"

Those who will be home in the next months

FEEDBACK/ C2

Use your Visa card to win like the Generoso family.

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DISNEYLAND

J Inigo B. Generoso won a trip for his family in the Visa Hong Kong Disneyland Getaway.

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2. Minimum of P500 single-receipt Visa purchase will allow Visa cardholder to register his/her Visa transaction for a chance to win one (1) of seven (7) Family of Four packages to Hong Kong Disneyland on March 2-4, 2006. PLUS HK$5,000 pocket money*.

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Visa <name as it appears on card,address,issuing bank,last 4 digits,amount of transaction,date of transaction,time of transaction> and send to the corresponding access number of your mobile network. (Note that there are no spaces after each comma. Please do not use commas for amounts more than P999.99, and when entering the address.)
Ex. Visa MENNIE SO,24/F 6750 AYALA AVENUE MAKATI CITY,AIG,1234,1000.25,112705,1808

2. Call Center: Metro Manila - 637 2768, Provincial - Toll Free # 1800-1888-2591

3. Website: www.hblmasia.com/visa

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Ang taong happy, yung may energy.

Michael V. naka-Enervon araw-araw

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more Energy mas Happy